

PEEPS AT  
GREAT EXPLORERS

VASCO DA GAMA

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

COLUMBUS  
CAPTAIN COOK  
LIVINGSTONE

By  
G. E. MITTON

MARCO POLO  
ALEXANDER THE GREAT

By  
SIR GEORGE SCOTT, K.C.I.E.

*Each containing twelve page illustrations, four of them in colour.*

AGENTS

America	THE MACMILLAN COMPANY 60 Fifth Avenue, NEW YORK
Australasia	OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS 205 Flinders Lane, MELBOURNE
Canada	THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF CANADA, LTD. 51. Martin's House, 70 Bond Street, TORONTO,
India	MACMILLAN & COMPANY, LTD. 276 Hornby Road, BOMBAY 291 Bow Bazar Street, CALCUTTA North Beach Road, MADRAS

IMPERIAL  
JAN 1 1900



THE EXPEDITION LEAVES THE COAST OF SPAIN



PEEPS AT GREAT EXPLORERS

# VASCO 'DA GAMA

DISCOVERER OF THE SEA ROUTE  
TO INDIA

BY

SIR GEORGE SCOTT, K.C.I.E.

AUTHOR OF

"ALEXANDER THE GREAT" AND "MARCO POLO,"  
IN THE SAME SERIES

WITH EIGHT FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS,  
FOUR OF THEM IN COLOUR

169 G 37

A. & C. BLACK, LTD.

4, 5 & 6 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W. 1

1929

169 G 37  
16.5

## NOTE

*Never was there a time when the exploration of the earth's surface appealed more strongly to the hearts and minds of men than it does now. The development of the aeroplane, with all its possibilities of penetration into regions inaccessible before, has created enthusiasm only comparable with the enthusiasm which burst forth in the Elizabethan age and sent men sailing into the unknown.*

*It is futile to say that the main outlines of all the countries of the world have been charted; there are still regions awaiting the magic touch of the discoverer, some holding remains of ancient civilisations which yield nothing in interest to those heretofore laid bare.*

*It must be remembered that it is only in our day man has reached the North and South Poles, and that first flights have been made over deserts hitherto untraversed and mountain ranges which have held their sombre secrets since the world began.*

*Could the mingled romance and heroism of travel ever soar higher than in the story of Scott's march to the South Pole, and his tragic return journey? In the story of every true explorer there is much to enlighten the mind and touch the heart in varying degree. In this series it is hoped to capture something of this enlightenment and pathos in the life-stories of those men who, imbued with the passion of discovery, have risked everything to fill in the map of the world.*

*The stories must be confined to those who are no longer among us, but will be brought up to the very date of yesterday in the case of Doughty, Scott, Peary, and many another. To tell such wondrous tales as they should be told, we must write of the men who first reached India and laid open the interior of the continent of Asia and the great Empire of China to wondering Western eyes; of those who revealed the linked mass of the Americas, where only a vast ocean scattered with islands had been supposed to exist; of the sailors who visited the four quarters of the globe, including the Polar regions; and of those who penetrated into the unknown interior of Africa.*

*In earlier days even the larger outlines were missing from our maps; to-day it is the more detailed work that is carried on, yet both appeal to everyone who has a spirit beyond the armchair and imagination to carry him on wings to the uttermost parts of the earth.*

*Printed in Great Britain*

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. EARLY YEARS - - - - -	1
II. PREPARATIONS - - - - -	10
III. THE VOYAGE ROUND AFRICA - - - - -	18
IV. CALICUT. "MOORS" AND MOPLAHS - - - - -	33
V. THE RETURN VOYAGE AND TWO FURTHER SAILINGS - - - - -	49
VI. DA GAMA'S SECOND VOYAGE - - - - -	60
VII. DOM VASCO IN RETIREMENT—AFFAIRS IN INDIA - - - - -	71
VIII. VASCO DA GAMA'S THIRD VOYAGE AND VICEROYALTY - - - - -	84

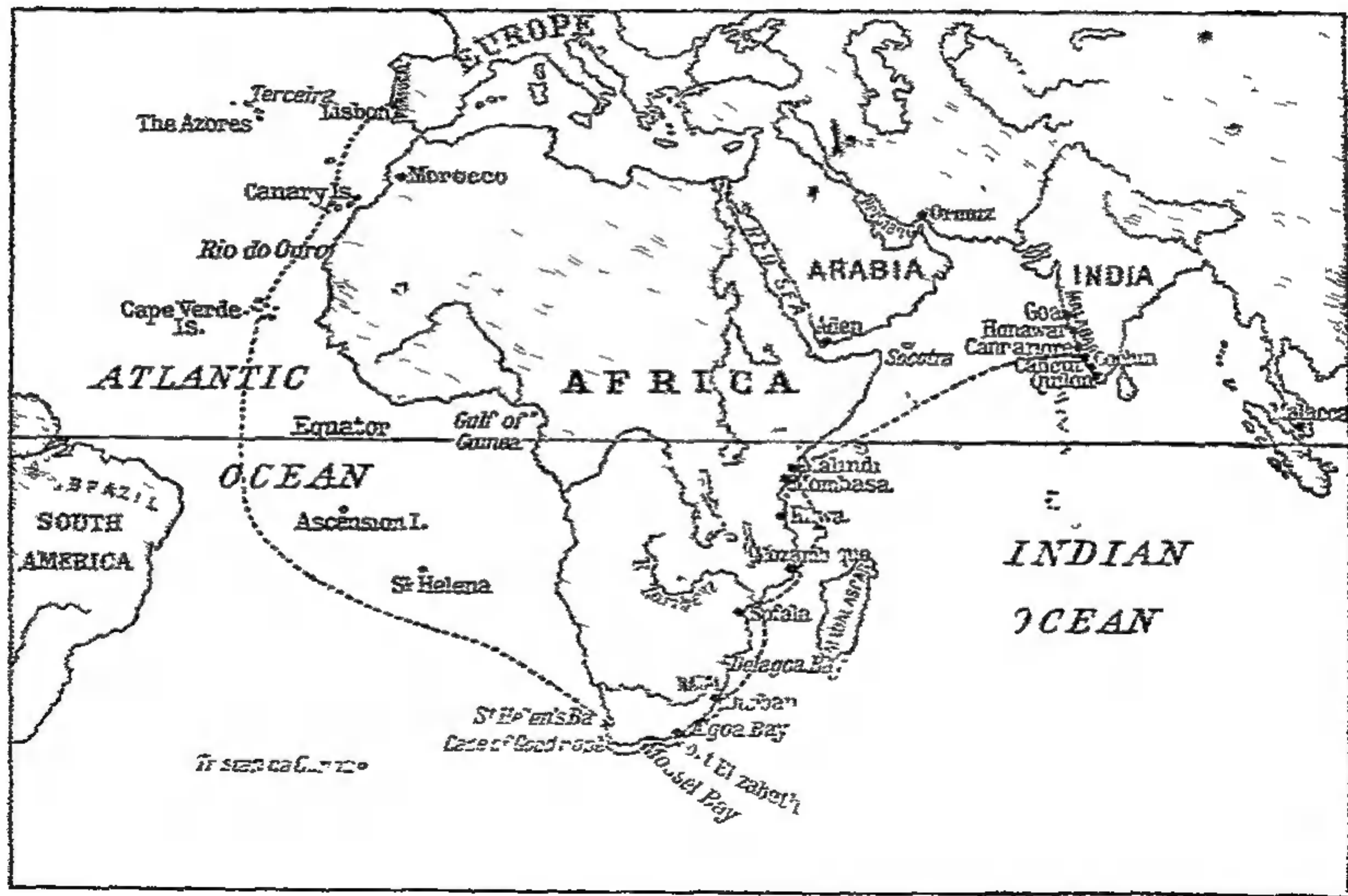
## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

*THE EXPEDITION LEAVES THE COAST OF SPAIN -	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
*DA GAMA LANDING NEAR CALICUT - - - - -	8
TAKING FRESH WATER ABOARD ON THE AFRICAN COAST - - - - -	31
VASCO DA GAMA - - - - -	38
*THE MERCHANTS OF CALICUT HELD AS HOSTAGES - - - - -	43
*THE RAJAH RECEIVES DA GAMA AT CANNANORE - - - - -	58
TREASURES OF THE EAST DISPLAYED TO THE KING AND QUEEN - - - - -	63
THE BOMBARDMENT OF CALICUT - - - - -	70

\* *These are in colour, the rest in black-and-white.*

NOTE.—The Portuguese write João and Tristão where our spelling is John and Tristan, but it would be affectation to use any other than the English transliteration in a mere sketch of Vasco da Gama's voyages.





SKETCH-MAP ILLUSTRATING DA GAMA'S VOYAGES.

*The dotted line indicates the first voyage to India.*



# VASCO DA GAMA

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS

VASCO DA GAMA was the third son of Estevan da Gama, who was Alcalde of Sines, in the province of Alemtejo, and was also for a time Comptroller of the Household to Afonso V. The alcalde married Dona Isabel Sodre, who belonged to a patrician family, and two of her brothers, Vicente and Bras, sailed in command of ships on da Gama's second voyage.

There is some doubt as to the exact date of Vasco's birth, but it is generally accepted that it was in 1469. At that time, and indeed until 1870, the office of alcalde was political as well as administrative, and the alcalde was chairman of the *ayuntamiento*, the town council. The office dated from Roman times, and the alcaldes had very considerable political power.

The da Gamas claimed to be descended from a knight who fought under Giraldo the Fearless when he conquered Evora, a rather barren district about seventy miles east by south of Lisbon. This was in 1166, and nineteen years earlier a contingent of Crusaders, on their way to join in the Second Crusade, helped to drive the Moors out of Lisbon. Henry of Huntingdon says they were mostly Englishmen, but the Flemish dispute this, and the Portuguese claim that if only there had been a national historian the story might have been differently told. However that may be, it is certain that many

## Vasco da Gama

knights and pilgrims from foreign lands came to fight against the cursed infidels, and when they were not helping to fight the Moors they did much to raise Portugal from the position of an obscure county, tributary to the insignificant kingdom of Leon, into the rank of the most conspicuous of European Powers. There is a list of Vasco's ancestors, but they are not recorded to have specially distinguished themselves, except perhaps Alvaro Annes da Gama, who was one of the famous captains who helped Afonso III. definitely to clear the Moors out of Portugal. Alvaro came from Estremadura in Spain, and all the Gammas until Estevan were more Iberian than Portuguese. After the Moors were expelled there still remained the Spaniards, and these were driven out after the fight at Aljubarrota.

John I. founded the dynasty of Aviz, under which Portugal was to grow to be the first maritime Power in Europe. John married a daughter of John of Gaunt, and so got help from England. In the fourteenth century caravels from Portugal sailed to England and Flanders and the towns of the Hanseatic League. John was surnamed the Great, and "time-honoured Lancaster's" daughter bore him five sons, all of whom were famous fighters, but the chief of them and the one that influenced da Gama most was Henry the Navigator. He first distinguished himself at the siege of Ceuta in 1415, when he was twenty-one years of age. Ceuta was called the African Gibraltar, and its capture led Portugal to a fierce struggle to destroy the Moslems and their religion.

The most noteworthy result, however, was to change Henry from a mere fighting man, like his brothers, into an empire builder. He was a very complicated personality. He might have been a forerunner of

## Early Years

Ignatius Loyola ; he might have been ■ famous scholar ; he might have been an astronomer, or ■ world explorer, or a simple shipbuilder. In fact, he was a little of all, and he added mysticism to his other qualities.

He did a great deal himself, but he still more influenced others, and particularly Vasco da Gama. The Prince built himself an observatory at the promontory of Sagres, not very far from Sines. He died nine years before Vasco was born, but his activities and the memory he left, directed the mind of the boy at Sines. The school of discovery at Sagres must have appealed to the youth's ambitions in the intervals of fishing and sailing on the open seas. He heard of the Prince's voyages along the African coast, the expedition to Madeira, successful in establishing the sugar industry at the second attempt ; the extended exploration which reached Cape Blanco in the extreme north-west of Mauretania, the discovery of the River Senegal and Cape Verde to the south of it, and finally the colonizing of the Azores.

Prince Henry was devoutly religious, but he was full of a deadly hate for the Moors and Islam. It was due to him that slavery, which was age-old in the East, developed into a profitable trade in the West, and was copied by others besides the Portuguese. The convenient priestly theory was that if the "heathen Caffres" lost their liberty they gained Christianity, and it was necessary to keep them as slaves in case they should fall back to their old error and idolatry. The "black ivory" traders adopted this view with smug enthusiasm, and almost believed themselves catechumens. They spent the profits in launching more caravels, and the profits were very great.

Vasco, like all the people of the small seaport of



## Vasco da Gama

Sines, must have been a sailor from his earliest youth. Sines was quite a trifling fishing hamlet, and the country behind was a dreary expanse of sand with occasional marshes and clumps of cork and screw-pine and oak. Therefore, the people of Sines were of necessity fishermen and coast-land sailors in addition to being fighting men, for the Portuguese had their century-long struggle with the Moors and with Spain, and were never at peace even at sea, where the Saltee rovers harried what craft ventured away from the land.

There is practically no record of Vasco's early years. Like his hero Henry the Navigator, he fought with distinction in Morocco, and because the grandson of old John of Gaunt was first Grand Master of the Order of Christ, which took the place of the famous Templars, suppressed by the Pope Clement V. in the Bull *Ad Providam*, Vasco no doubt joined the new Order in memory of the royal student who had lived so near Sines. At any rate, the sails of his fleet were always blazoned with the cross of the Order.

Afonso V. carried on the work of the Navigator so vigorously that he was called "the African," because, as the historian Barros says, "he raged round Africa as a hungry lion roars round some guarded fold," and sailors of his explored the whole of the Gulf of Guinea. His successor, John II., freed from homeland jars, did still more, and in 1481 he founded the first permanent settlement on the mainland of Western Africa. This was San Jorje da Mina, in the Bight of Benin, near the present Cape Coast Castle. The settlement was noteworthy in itself, but it is still more worth recording, because among his lieutenants were two men who were to become famous—Christopher Columbus and Bartholomeu Dias.



## Early Years

Bartholomeu Dias da Novaes was the first man to round the Cape of Good Hope. He did it by accident, because a storm blew him round, and he called it the Cabo Tormentoso. When the King heard of it the name was changed, with an eye on the hoped-for sea route to India.

Christopher Columbus might have given John II. the distinction of organizing the discovery of America, as well as the ocean way to Asia. Columbus actually proposed the adventure to the King, who referred it to a committee, mostly religious, and they rejected it. Columbus laid the chief blame on the "Jew Joseph" (the Rabbi Vecinho), and he left Portugal for good. All of them had been stirred by the account Ser Marco Polo gave of the wealth of the Indies, but their ideas of getting there were different. The fierce hatred of Portugal for all Moors, as they persisted in calling Moslems everywhere, was the final determining factor. Voyager after voyager sailed down the coast of Africa. Diego Cam, in 1482, when Vasco da Gama was thirteen years old, discovered the mouth of the Congo, and carved a cross on a cliff overhanging a tributary, with the shield of the House of Aziz, and an inscription which can still be read: "Hither came the ships of the illustrious King Dom John II. of Portugal: Diego Cam, Pedro Anes, Pedro da Costa." Later granite pillars, called *padram*, with the cross and the royal arms, were set up right round the coast of Africa, and several are to be seen in the Royal Geographical Society of Lisbon.

Marco Polo's book was probably the most popular work in these days, and, what most interested the monkish student Prince Henry, was the story of Prester John. The Venetian's account of this great potentate does not suggest a very creditable Christian,

## Vasco da Gama

but the scrupulous might have said the same of some of the Popes, and in those days the chief duty of Christians was considered to be to kill Moors. The Grand Turk was supreme in the Mediterranean, and sent out privateers and pirates, filled with men whose firm belief was that to kill a Christian was a sure passport to Paradise.

Two centuries before this the nebulous Prester John was credited with a vainglorious letter addressed to the Emperor Comnenus at Constantinople. About a hundred years after this Prester John was supposed to have established himself in Abyssinia, and to be as powerful and Christian as ever.

Europe at that time firmly believed that a western branch of the Nile flowed into the Atlantic. Prince Henry determined to find this river, to sail up it to Abyssinia, and, in alliance with Prester John, to crush the Turks, rescue the Holy Places, and make an end of the Moslem menace. This seemed infinitely more attractive than seeking for a new continent beyond the Atlantic.

Diego Cam planted the Portuguese flag and the granite pillars as far south as Walfisch Bay, and his work was carried on by Bartholomeu Dias, who actually passed the Cape without knowing it and reached Algoa Bay.

While his ships were feeling the way to India by sea, John II. tried to get into touch with the shadowy Eastern *Beglerbeg*. He sent several explorers to follow up the caravan routes to India and China. Only one of them did much : the Jew, John de Covilhan. Others as well as he sent reports, but his only were valuable. He visited the Malabar coast, was refused a passage from Calicut by suspicious Arab merchants,

## Early Years

but made his way by Arabia and Suez to Abyssinia, where he died, apparently a prisoner. At any rate, he never came back to Lisbon. There ■ an Abyssinian priest called Lucas Marcos, who visited Lisbon in 1490, but he seems to have been an Egyptian spy rather than an envoy.

The sea therefore seemed to promise best, and Dom John II. resolved to send a flotilla. Bartholomeu Dias would ostensibly have been the man to lead it, but he does not seem to have been more than a bold sailor with ■ shipbuilding brother, and he had no one at Court to back him. Therefore, when John II. made his plans he intended to appoint Estevan da Gama, Vasco's father, to command the expedition.

King John, Henry the Navigator, and Estevan all died before the fleet for India could be got ready; but Manoel, surnamed the Fortunate, threw all his energy into the enterprise.

There are a great many books about the Portuguese doings in India, but the chief chroniclers, as far as Vasco da Gama is concerned, are Gaspar Correa, John de Barros, and Fernan Lopes de Castanheda. There is also the *Roteiro*, a journal of the first voyage of Vasco da Gama, 1497-1499, put together by an unknown sailor of Gama's fleet, which is especially interesting as far as it goes.

Of the others, Correa went out to India in 1512, and was for three years secretary to the great Albuquerque. It is not known when or where he died, but he was still writing in 1566.

Barros never was in India, but he was factor of the "House of India and the Mines," and ■ historiographer royal. Therefore he had access to many State papers, and must be assumed to be accurate.

## Vasco da Gama

Castanheda did visit India in 1528, and remained there ten years.

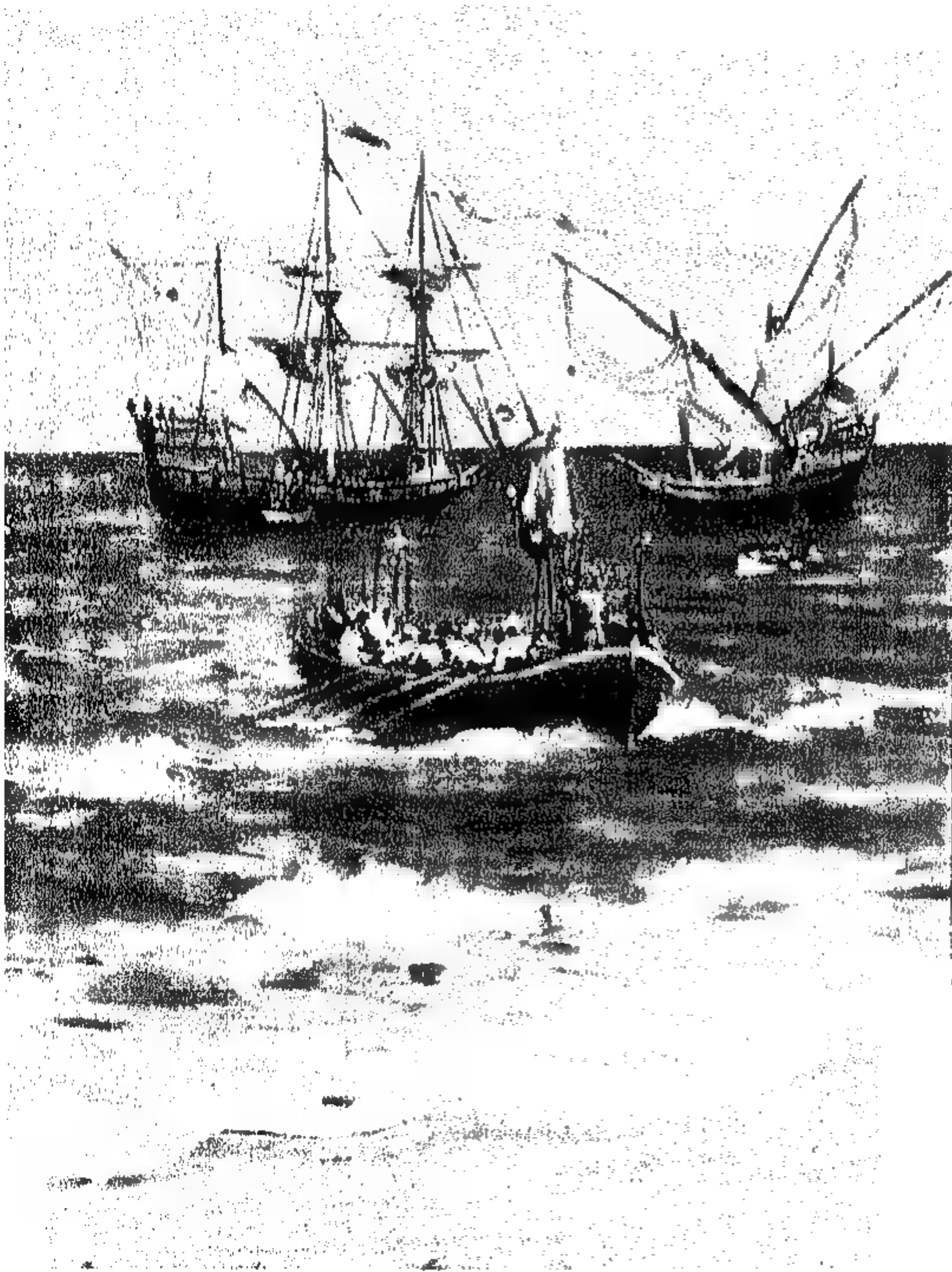
Correa and Castanheda are the only two who wrote from an actual knowledge of India, and Castanheda was for twenty years Keeper of the Archives in Coimbra University. Correa had secured the diary of a priest, John Figueira, who sailed with Vasco da Gama. He was very young when he went to India, and no doubt made notes of the tales of old warriors. He is therefore rather garrulous in his account of the first voyage, but that does not take away from his trustworthiness, and it is generally admitted that his record of the third voyage is to be accepted as quite the best. Correa intended his *Lendas da India* to be posthumous, and it was not published till long after he was dead. Therefore, it escaped the censure of the Inquisition, and also the efforts at suppression made by persons in high position whose conduct was not a matter of pride even to themselves.

Castanheda had a good part of his chronicle suppressed by the Inquisition; so had Barros, though he was Historiographer Royal. Damian de Goes was another Keeper of the Royal Archives, who wrote so disquietingly that he was not only deprived of his office, besides having part of his writings suppressed, but was clapped in gaol.

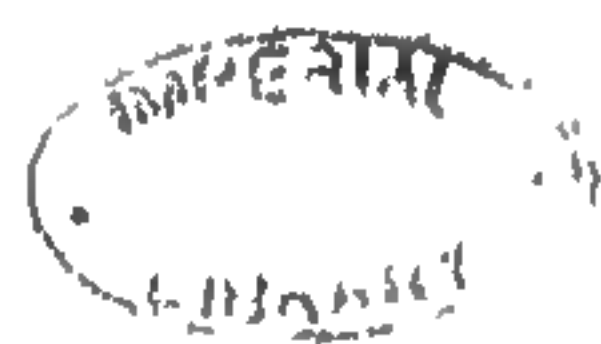
Osorio da Fonseca, Bishop of Silves, who is also much quoted, on his own admission, based much of his account of Manoel's reign on Goes. Goes wrote in Latin, and the Bishop, possibly because of his cloth, and possibly because of the discretion implied by translation, escaped trouble with the Inquisitors.

The various writers differ very widely, not only as to days but even as to months, in their record of sail-





DA GAMA LANDING NEAR CALCUT Chapter IV.



## Early Years

ings; but since Barros and Osorio had archives to refer to, their dates are most generally accepted.

The *Lusiads* of Luiz da Camoens are inseparably connected with Vasco da Gama. The epic is not a chronicle of him, though it describes the voyage to India, and gives a summary of every heroic or dramatic incident in Portuguese history, and Camoens is declared to be the greatest poet of the sea since Homer. His grandfather married a Dona Guiomar da Gama, and the poet met Gaspar Corréa in Malacca and probably read the manuscript of *Lendas da India*. In any case, he followed the same line to India as Vasco had sailed sixty years earlier. He stayed a considerable time in Goa. He visited the Malabar coast, so that he could speak of the country from first hand. He went far farther east than Vasco, and the grotto where he wrote the *Lusiads* is still shown in Macao. As a gay young spark he knew Courts in Lisbon and Coimbra. He was in gaol in Malacca, Goa, and Mozambique for debts contracted owing to his Don Juan propensities, and he made Vasco famous for all time. The *Lusiads* was published by royal license in 1571, and the Dominican censor of the Inquisition saw fit to pass it. His decision ran:

“I have seen, by order of the Holy and General Inquisition, these ten cantos of the *Lusiads* of Luis de Camoens, concerning the valiant feats of arms done by the Portuguese in Asia and Europe; and I have found in them nothing scandalous, nor contrary to Faith and good manners; only it seemed necessary to me to warn readers that the author, to magnify the difficulty of the navigation of the Portuguese in India, makes use of a fiction of the Gods of the Heathen. And, inasmuch as St. Augustine admits, among his *Confessions*, that in

## Vasco da Gama

the books which he composed *De Ordine*, he invoked the Muses, being Goddesses, therefore ■ this is Poesy and invention, and the author as a Poet, claims only to adorn his poetic style, we hold this fable of the Gods in his work not to be unseemly, it being recognized as fabulous, and saying the truth of our holy faith, that all the Gods of the Heathen are devils. Wherefore it seems to me that the book is worthy to be printed, and the author shows in it much talent, and much erudition in the humane sciences."

King Sebastian rewarded the author with an annuity of fifteen *milreis* (£10), to be paid for three years, when the *Lusiads* appeared in 1572. Therefore, we are not deprived of the account of the Isle of Venus, which is, in fact, only ■ poetical expansion of the idea that a sailor has ■ wife in every port, and especially we have the Vision of Adamastor, quite in the classical vein that was imperative for poets in those days.

## CHAPTER II

### PREPARATIONS

ESTEVAN DA GAMA had three sons, and Vasco was the third of them. Of the eldest nothing is recorded unless it is that he was a priest. When the father died, Paulo, the second son, was absent from the Court because he had wounded the judge of Setubal in a duel. King Manoel named Vasco to be head of the expedition as *Capitan-Mór*. Vasco diffidently said that it was not right that he should be set over his elder brother. Manoel readily enough pardoned Paulo and allowed him to return to Lisbon, but he realized that Vasco was "a discreet man of good understanding and of



## Preparations

great courage for any good deed." That seems to show that Vasco had distinguished himself in Morocco fighting or in sea-craft, but there are no details. The chroniclers are all agreed that Paulo was very gentle and sweet-tempered; but Manoel, who was neither, quite reasonably insisted that these were not the qualities wanted, but made the concession that Paulo might go in command of the second ship; and so the question was settled. When the flotilla sailed the Royal Standard was flown on Paulo's ship, a sign either of Vasco's stubbornness or of brotherly affection.

Whatever Paulo had done in his earlier years--he must have been nearly forty, for Vasco was in his thirty-seventh year—he proved on the voyage to be very capable in the handling of a ship. Probably he had commanded one of the caravels that conveyed troops across the straits to fight in Morocco, and he also, no doubt, made use of Prince Henry's school of navigation.

The fact that Bartholomeu Dias and Diego Cam were available also seems to show that Vasco had made a name for himself, and events proved that Manoel was a good judge of character.

John II. had had timber felled and set to season for the building of the ships, and work was pushed on with great energy. Bartholomeu Dias threw himself into the work with a zeal which showed that he had no feeling that he had been passed over. It is not clear what had become of Diego Cam. There is a suggestion that he had been drowned at sea, or perhaps had settled on shore; but Bartholomeu Dias knew everything that it was necessary to know: the need for ships that could stand stormy seas; the stowage capacity, which would be much greater than had been required for mere coasting

## Vasco da Gama

traffic, and the desirability of having spare sails, cordage, and parts which might be necessary beyond spars. Bartholomeu had done some shipbuilding, and, at any rate, his brother Peter was actually a shipbuilder. It was no doubt on their advice that the ships were built to the one pattern and size, so that parts might be interchanged.

The old Portuguese caravels had been the fastest craft afloat, but Dias' experience of the Tempestuous Sea and Cape convinced him that speed must be sacrificed to seaworthiness. The ships were of the familiar Middle Ages type—new-moon-shaped, with high bows and stern. They were bluff in the bows and square in the poop, and, since their breadth was about a third of their length, they were much more like a tub or a coracle than a racing yacht. They had three masts: the fore- and main-masts rigged with square sails, and the mizzen with the leg-of-mutton sail familiar on the feluccas of the Mediterranean. There was also a high-pointed jib-boom, which had much the look of a fourth mast. They therefore differed a good deal from the galleons, which had one or more banks of oars, and, at first at any rate, were intended for coast work or narrow seas. The name was retained when they grew into battle-ships with two or three tiers of guns. The galliot, which is often loosely used as a synonym, was built for speed, and took its name from the shark or swordfish. It was therefore specially applied to pirate ships, or the ships built to catch them.

There were two principal ships: the *San Gabriel*, which Vasco da Gama took as his flagship, and the *San Raphael*, commanded by his brother Paulo. Along with these was a lateen-rigged caravel, used for leading the way and sounding in harbours or shallow waters.

## Preparations

Correa calls it the *Berrio*, and it is most commonly referred to by that name, after its former owner | but it is sometimes called the *San Miguel*. It was commanded by Nicholas Coelho, a relative of the da Gamas. To these were added a store-ship, like the *Berrio*, bought for the voyage. The chroniclers fail to agree about their tonnage, and the estimates vary for the two principal ships between 90 and 120 tons. The ton measurement of Portugal was, however, greater than that of England. The *Berrio* is put down at 50 tons, and the store-ship at 200. It was commanded by Gonzalo Nunes. The armament consisted of twenty guns, divided between the high bow and stern, which were called castles, and served as such when there was close fighting. Their daily run naturally varied with the weather. Two hundred miles in the day seems to have been the best.

The preparations, under the eye and with the advice of Bartholomeu Dias, were thorough. Stores were taken for three years, and Vasco da Gama himself urged the sailors to prepare for the voyage by studying carpentry, rope-making, caulking, plank work, and blacksmith training. It is expressly stated that no matchlocks were taken on either the first or the second voyage. The fighting tops were manned by cross-bowmen.

The ordinary sailors' pay was to be five *cruzadoes* a month, and they were to get two more during this preliminary training. The value of the *cruzado* varied considerably, but 2s. 9d. was about the average equivalent. A fair proportion of the crews were men who had made the voyage round the Cape with Bartholomeu Dias, but there is no mention of the *fidalgos* who joined the second voyage in some numbers. Bartholomeu

## Vasco da Gama

himself sailed with them in a caravel to take up his appointment as "Lord of Guinea" at St. George of the Mine. The ship's library included the Geography of Ptolemy, the Book of Ser Marco Polo, copies of the reports made by Covilhan and Lucas Marcos (the Abyssinian monk who had come to Lisbon in 1490), besides, naturally, Dias' log and charts.

King John II. had been very thorough in his enquiries. According to Correa, though the other chroniclers have nothing to say about it, he had engaged "a foreign merchant named Janifante" to explore the coast of Guinea. He seems to have been associated with Dias, but he never navigated except in sight of land, because he found that caravels could not stand the sudden wild storms of the Bay of Benin. It was as much on his advice as Dias' that the stronger type of ships was planned, and that the King set about getting seasoned timber for the vessels which Manoel completed. Janifante is also credited with giving much information about the Venetian and Egyptian trade in Indian goods. Also it was apparently he who put Manoel in touch with Abraham Zakut, to learn all about the nautical instruments, which, he maintained, were imperative for deep-sea sailing. Janifante died soon after his return to Lisbon from the Guinea coast.

Abraham Ben Samuel Zacuto was Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy in the University of Salamanca when John II. invited him to Portugal to become Astronomer Royal. It is hinted that Vasco da Gama took lessons from him in the use of the tables which the learned Jew drew up. Correa, who calls him Sacoto, says Manoel wanted him to consult the planets as to the prospects of a venture in India, but it is not recorded that he got more than a variety of mis-



## Preparations

cellaneous information, including an account of the monsoon winds in the Indian Ocean. His most valuable assistance, however, was the fashioning of an astrolabe, which showed the altitude of the sun. This astrolabe was a copper tube, marked with lines and points, and a small plate suspended from a ring, showing the degrees. There were holes opposite one another in the tube, so that the sun "shone through them at the moment of midday." He also drew up "navigating needles," charts with lines of different colours to record the air currents, and making the shaping of the course on the deep sea where no land was visible less of a haphazard business. Another chart showed how to steer by the North Star when the sun was obscured. Da Gama soon found that the copper astrolabe was not much use on small ships in Atlantic seas, and fitted up a wooden substitute on the same principle. When the flotilla got to the Indian Ocean it was found that the Arabs and Hindu sailors had very much better copper astrolabes, and were able to show them greatly superior charts, and especially how to navigate by the stars. The Portuguese chroniclers were too proud to admit this skill in navigation, and the wooden astrolabe was retained. It was of "three spans diameter, which they mounted on three poles, in the manner of shears, the better to make sure of and ascertain the solar line." The modern sextant did not displace the astrolabe till long after da Gama's time.

When Manoel had got all he wanted out of Zakut, he seems to have neglected him. At any rate, when in the year da Gama sailed for India 20,000 Jews were persecuted, the astrologer fled to escape forcible baptism, "and died in the error in which the Enemy

## Vasco da Gama

blinded him, having acquired such knowledge of the stars, and remaining blind in such a bright day as is our holy Catholic faith."

The nautical instruments thus were very elementary for blue-water sailing. The ships were absolutely insignificant when compared with our modern standards, and the number of the crews was necessarily limited to the size of the ships. They were certainly not imposing for a voyage across unknown seas that was to last for two years. The lowest figure given is 148, the highest 170, and these included a batch of *degradados*, convicts under sentence of death, who were to be used economically on land service where it was not considered safe to detach able-bodied seamen. One hundred *cruzadoes* were paid to each of the married men, "to leave it to their wives," and forty *cruzadoes* to each of the single men, "for them to fit themselves out." The two brothers were to have a "gratification" of 2,000 *cruzadoes*, and Nicholas Coelho 1,000. A note was made in a register at the House of the Mines of every seaman, the names of their parents and their home towns. This list no longer exists.

Correa alone says that the King and Queen and the gentlemen of the Court heard Mass and saw the party off. He seems to have been mistaken. All, however, agree that captains and crews went down to the Chapel of Our Lady at Belem, the port which Henry the Navigator had founded, and there they kept vigil all night. The Vicar of the humble chapel on which the stately pile now stands heard a general confession, and absolution was pronounced to all those who might lose their lives at sea. A great procession was formed to the beach at Rastello—mud-flats which at that time made Belem no great port. Vasco da Gama and his officers

## Preparations

with lighted candles in their hands led the way, and behind them came a body of priests and friars chanting a litany, while a huge gathering from the city followed, barcheaded, reciting the responses. A service was held, and all fell on their knees on the mud-flats. When the voyagers were rowed out to the ships the Royal Standard was broken at the main of the *San Gabriel* and the sails were set, all of them displaying the great red cross of the Order of Christ.

There is a great difference ■ to the date on which they sailed. Correa says ~~it~~ was on "Our Lady of March" (the 25th). Bishop Osorio says it was July 9. Careful research seems to prove that it was July 8, 1497 (New Style, July 23). This was the year before Columbus discovered the Orinoco.

The send-off was pious, but it was not enthusiastic. Camoens says :

"The multitude already deemed us lost  
In the long mazes of a barren chase ;  
The wails of women saddened all the coast,  
Mixed with the groans of men."

And an "old man of venerable look" did not cheer them. "From a full heart, and skilled in worldly lore," he declaimed :

"O passion of dominion ! O fond lust  
Of that poor vanity that men call Fame !  
O treacherous appetite whose highest gust  
Is vulgar breath that taketh honour's name !  
O fell ambition, terrible but just  
Art thou to breasts that cherish most thy flame !  
Brief life for them is peril, storm and rage,  
This world a hell and death their heritage.

"Shrewd prodigal, whose riot is the dearth  
Of states and principalities oppress !  
Plunder and rape are of thy loathly birth ;  
Thou art alike of life and soul the pest.

## Vasco da Gama<sup>A</sup>

High titles greet thee on this slavish earth ;  
Yet none so vile but they would fit thee best !  
But Fame forsooth and Glory thou art styled,  
And the blind head is by a sound beguiled."

### CHAPTER III

#### THE VOYAGE <sup>1</sup>ROUND AFRICA

THE four vessels passed wide of the Azores, which had been colonized by Portugal over sixty years before, and in eight days they reached the Canaries, and saw the high land of the coast of Africa. When they were off the Rio do Ouro ■ dense fog came down during the night. This "Gold River," by the way, is really an inlet and not a river.

Bartholomeu Dias and Pedro da Alemquer, who had steered Dias' boat round the Cape three years before, were on board, and there were besides a number of old sailors, who had been out on the slaving expeditions started by Diego Cam, and they recognized the fog as inevitable on this coast. They advised, therefore, that if the ships got separated they should make independently for Samthiago (Santiago) in the Cape Verde Islands. This they did, and arrived one by one on a date about which the chroniclers are hopelessly disagreed. The *San Raphael* found the *Berrio* and the store-ship immediately, but it was four days before they picked up the *San Gabriel* with the Captain-Major on board. When they did they saluted him with the firing of bombards—guns made of iron bars bound together with hoops—and with flourishes of trumpets. They were very fond of demonstrations of the kind on all possible occasions.

Bartholomeu Dias left them here to take up his appointment as Captain of the Mine of St. George, but



## The Voyage Round Africa

before he left he advised that they should fetch a compass wide of the currents, fitful squalls, and doldrums of the Gulf of Guinea. Accordingly, they bore west to within six hundred miles of the South American coast, and after covering 4,500 miles in ninety-six days, both figures more or less, they cast anchor in what da Gama christened St. Helen's Bay, a name that is still maintained. This was far ahead of any record of a voyage out of sight of land. Columbus, between the Canaries and Guanahani, had sailed only 2,600 miles.

At St. Helen's Bay they stayed eight days, and the ships were careened and the barnacles and seaweed were scraped off. The second day they caught a man collecting honey from bees'-nests in the sandy hillocks and took him on board. There they fed him with dishes the like of which he had never known, and gave him a suit of clothes to cover the irreducible minimum which was all he wore.

A couple of days later forty or fifty of these Flotten-tots came on board of their own accord and were duly fed, but the sight of so many of them without any clothes had lost its novelty, and no attempt was made to cover their nakedness.

The writer of the *Roteiro*, Alvarez Velho or another, after so many days with nothing to see but the waves of the South Atlantic, makes a good many notes about these "Caffres." They were tawny, wore sea-shells or bits of copper in their ears, carried fish-spears tipped with antelope horns, hardened in the fire, and hunted the antelopes with packs of hounds, which, the chronicler remarks, "barked just like those of Portugal." Unfortunately they had no notions of trade. Gold and cinnamon were shown to them, but they were not in the least interested in gold or cinnamon. Tin rings and

## Vasco da Gama

bells pleased them much more, and they had nothing to sell.

One of the rare comic touches is told of Fernando Velloso. He was "for ever boasting of his prowess," and got permission to visit the kraal of the Caffres. What happened is not clear, but after a time those on the ship saw Velloso legging it down the hill slope with a mob of the villagers after him. Some of his shipmates landed to protect him, and Barros says one of them sang out: "It's easier coming down hill than climbing it," and Velloso, unabashed, called back: "When these black dogs began to crowd me, I remembered you and hurried back to protect you." The Hottentots flung stones and fired arrows, and a fish-spear struck the Captain-Major, who had landed to take observations with the astrolabe. It got him in the leg, but it cannot have been anything serious, for we are told that nobody was badly hurt. The writer of the *Roteiro*, nevertheless, significantly remarks that there would have been no trouble if they had taken arms on shore with them.

Shortly afterwards the ships sailed for the Cape, something under a hundred miles off. They met strong head winds, and only succeeded in rounding it after several attempts, but it was a much less formidable adventure than they had expected. The date was probably November 22, 1497, and from this time on the Cape became that of Good Hope, and no longer the Cape of Storms. They do not mention Saldanha Bay, as other early navigators called Table Bay, but they do notice another inlet away to the south, False Bay, which got a bad name for wrecks.

It was on this date, the fifth day after leaving St. Helen's Bay, that Camoens had his famous vision of Adamastor.

## The Voyage Round Africa

The sturdy and stubborn Vasco da Gama saw no monstrous and threatening figure in the storm-clouds. The crews heard no angry voice booming above the storm. The Captain-Major might have muttered a paternoster, but he would have driven on. If the crews had seen or heard they might well have been scared into the mutiny which broke out not long after.

It was in this Saldanha Bay that the first Viceroy was killed ten years later by the Hottentots. The superstitious might have shaken their heads over it. Camoens on his way home from the vice and iniquities of Golden Goa might well have put his own presentiments into the mouth of the poetic phantom.

Three days after this rounding of the Cape the flotilla reached the Bay of St. Blasius (Sam Bras), now called Mossel Bay. This was the place where Bartholomeu Dias had struck land after his roundabout in the south, whither the winds had driven him. He called it the Herdsmen's Bight, because he saw men tending cattle on the slopes, and a reference to the log showed that Dias had been stoned by the natives while he was shipping fresh water, and had killed one of them with a quarrel from a crossbow. Therefore, when he landed da Gama took an armed party with him so that the St. Helen's Bay brabble should not be repeated.

The "negroes with frizzled hair," however, either took this quite as the ordinary course with strangers, or they had heard from St. Helen's Bay, a matter or sixty leagues across country, that the voyagers were not dangerous. At any rate, quite a number of them came down to the beach, some of them, women among the rest, riding on oxen with saddles made of reeds. This was a sure proof of friendliness, or at any rate of absence of suspicion, and it was proved when they complaisantly

## Vasco da Gama

accepted some "little round bells" which were thrown on shore to them.

The *Capitan-Môr* bought a fat black ox, which proved to be "as toothsome as the beef of Portugal," and it cost no more than three bracelets. These details suggest that they were Bantu rather than Hottentots.

The ships stayed thirteen days in Mossel Bay, and the store-ship was broken up and its load divided among the other vessels. Relations were quite friendly, and the Portuguese sailors sang and danced together "in the style of negroes," which suggests the cake-walk and the tango. Da Gama himself joined in the dancing, presumably in a hornpipe. The native Pan-pipes, responded to by the Portuguese trumpets, furnished the music.

Unhappily the harmony did not last. There was "some contention between the sailors and the negroes respecting the barter of cattle." An unusually large number of men gathered on the beach looking distinctly less than friendly, while the women perched on the hill slopes to look on; so it was thought well to fire a couple of bombards, and this sent all of them, men and women, scuttling into the bush.

Before he sailed on December 8, da Gama set up a pillar and cross made out of a broken mizzen-mast, but just as they were starting they saw ten or twelve negroes demolishing both. Later they might have resented this with bombards, but they did nothing, and on the 16th passed the mouth of the Rio do Infante, now called the Great Fish River. Apparently they saw the pillar B. Dias had set up to mark the farthest point reached by him in 1488, not, as the name he gave it suggests, on the island Da Cruz, but farther on, near what are now called the Bird Islands, on the eastern side of Algoa Bay. There are six inlets here, and the most easterly was



## The Voyage Round Africa

called Da Lagos, and in it Port Elizabeth now stands.

About here they met with very bad weather, so bad that Coelho's caravel was blown away. He rejoined, however, and then all the three ships put out to sea to escape being driven on a lee-shore. When they made the land again they found that they were back at Santa Cruz, sixty leagues behind their dead reckoning. It was their first experience of the strong current which sweeps round the Indian Ocean and from Cape Gardafui sets down along the coast. In the north it is called the Mozambique current, and in the south the Agulhas. Madagascar splits the main volume, just as the Gulf Stream finds a passage through the Straits of Florida. Marco Polo had heard of this Mozambique current, and says Indian seafarers would not go south because they could not make their way back again. There is a confirmatory reference in the "Arabian Nights." Sinbad the Sailor sailed south and put down his exceptionally long runs to the attraction of a "Magnet Mountain." There is nothing about his going back, or trying to go back, again. The current is a permanent fact, and runs at the rate of from one to four knots an hour.

Fortunately for the explorers, a strong south-wester set in, and they were able to beat the current, but meanwhile the crews had become utterly despondent. They lost all hope, and there was a threatened mutiny. Correa is the only chronicler who has much to say about it, and he does so at enormous length. It is very possible that he got his details from old salts, whose habit with marines and landsmen is well established. Still, there was a mutiny, though the *Roteiro* and Barros say nothing about it. The censors no doubt saw to that. Bishop Osorio does mention a mutiny, but he says it occurred

## Vasco da Gama

before the doubling of the Cape. Camoens was concerned only with the glorification of the *Lusiados*, the Lusitanians, his fellow-countrymen, and ignored everything that was not heroic.

The strong south-west wind which set in saved the situation. They sailed along a coast which was quite new to Western navigators. They called it Natal, because they were off it on Christmas Day, and the name has been kept for the province, though not for Durban, the capital. Unhappily they had to put out to sea again so far that they ran out of drinking-water and had to use sea-water for cooking. When they made the land again they found a small river and anchored at the mouth of it. The coast-line here has altered a great deal, and it is not easy to fix what river it was that they called *Do Cobre*, because of the copper wire which the natives wore on their legs and arms and twisted in their hair. Probably it was the Zavora. They noticed as a singular fact that there were no flies. The people were quite friendly and traded copper bracelets for cotton shirts. It seemed to have been desirable, for they were quite naked and "had tangled hair like Caffres." They ate "bread and marmalade" with great appreciation, after they had seen some of the crew prove that it was quite safe, and they supplied not only drinking-water, but fresh meat and vegetables. Therefore it was called the Good Folks' country (*Boa Gente*).

From here three days took them to the mouth of a great river, the Kilimani, a mouth of the Zambesi. They called it the River of *Bons Signaes* (of Good Omen), because they were told large ships put into it.

Salt-water cooking and salt junk had brought on scurvy, which carried off about thirty men. It was quite

## The Voyage Round Africa

a new disease to them, and to all the sailor-men of those days. Deep-sea sailing and the consequent need of salt beef and pork were no doubt responsible in the case of the voyagers. Camoens and all the chroniclers therefore refer to it:

"Such fell disease  
And loathsome as till then I ne'er beheld."

The ships remained thirty-two days in the estuary of the River of Good Hope, no doubt because of this scourge, but also for the screening of the ships and the repair of a mast of the *San Raphael* which had sprung. They also set up a *padrao* as a claim to the sovereignty of Portugal.

On their passage from the River Do Cobre they had kept well out to sea, and so had overshot Sofala, which they very much wanted to see, because of its fame as a gold port. As a matter of fact, what gold it shipped came from the interior, quite possibly Zimbabwe, but Sofala had the name, even in Milton's time—"Sófala thought Ophir," where both the thought and the accent are mistaken. Beira, forty miles to the north, has taken the place of Sofala.

To avoid similar disappointments, from here on they followed the coast and anchored at night, and in six days they reached a bight with a seaward fringe of low islands. The *Berio*, which as a regular thing was sent to feel the way, grounded on a mud-flat and broke her rudder. After a little, however, they found deep water and went on to anchor off "the village." This was Mozambique, and it cannot have been so very small, for in a very short time half a dozen *almadias* (dugouts), full of men, put out to meet them. Some of them were playing on *anafils*, a sort of trumpet like a short post-horn, and they seemed quite friendly. So was the chief, whom

## Vasco da Gama

Correa calls the *Xeque* (Sheikh), who came off from the island next day. Then they found that they had got to a new land where there were "Moors."

The bulk of the population, however, was neither Arab nor Bantu. Arabs had been trading here for some hundred years, and had intermarried with the "Caffres," so that there was a very considerable half-caste population, all of them, however, Moslems. The Mozambique and Agulhas currents had prevented these men from Oman and Muscat from pushing farther south. With the square sails on their masts they could only sail with a stern wind, and this was too uncertain to enable them to defeat the current. There was, however, a considerable trade from the Indian coast carried on in dhows, and there were colonies of Indians settled along the coast northwards. These men were all Malabarais, and followers of the Hindu faith. The Arabs called them Christians, and there was a sort of subdued warfare always going on with them.

The Sheikh, also otherwise called the Sultan, began by taking the new arrivals for Turks, or white Arabs, but when he found that they were Christians his friendship changed to animosity.

Da Gama's men were not what we should consider notable for their Christianity, and the discovery was made accidentally. There was a Moor on board called Davane, who had been made prisoner out of a *zambuk* (a galley) on the passage up to Mozambique. He is mentioned only by Correa, but he seems to have been a good deal made use of in communications with the shore, and may have formed the opinion that the crews were certainly not Turks, nor Hindus either. A still more convincing proof in the eyes of the Sheikh, whose name was Shah Khwaja, was that some "Christian



## The Voyage Round Africa

prisoners" who came on board prostrated themselves before a painting of the Angel Gabriel. It is not clear whether these were men from Abyssinia, or Nestorians from South Malabar, or plain Hindus who took Gabriel—or the Holy Ghost, as Barros puts it—for Shiva. At any rate, the fanatical chief was convinced that these were Christians, and therefore to be made an end of. He had given them two pilots, and the ships went a league or so out to sea and anchored at the island of San Jorge. Here Mass was celebrated, and there was a general confession and communion. Then the *Xeque's* mind was quite made up.

When two of the ships' boats put ashore to fetch wood and water and to find one of the two pilots who had disappeared, they were met by five boats, full of men armed with bows, long spears, and bucklers. Da Gama must have suspected treachery, for he was in one boat and Nicholas Coelho in the other, and they promptly opened fire with crossbows and bombards, which sent the islanders flying back again.

The Captain-Major thought it more important to go on than to demand explanations, so he set off immediately. The ships had not gone far when a dead calm set in, and the current got hold of them, with the result that on the third day they found they were four leagues south of Mozambique, so they had to make their way back to San Jorge again, and stayed at anchor there for eight days, waiting for a favourable wind. The supply of water ran out, and there was none on the island, so they moved back into the harbour. The chief sent them a clerk, "who was a great drunkard," and led them through a maze of islands to a point where on the mainland they saw a crowd of men. They do not seem to have determined whether these were mere sightseers

## Vasco da Gama

or were actively hostile, but to make sure fired three bombards at them.

The same evening an Arab came and volunteered to take them to the spring. This was on the mainland, and when they reached it they found that a stockade had been run up, and was full of armed men, who showered stones from slings, arrows, and javelins (*azagaias*) on them. The boats let fly with their bombards and then landed, but it was next day before they got their water-supply. To protect the fatigue parties they discharged bombards at large into the bush. Then they returned to the San Jorje anchorage, and after three days' waiting for a fair wind sailed again.

In order to get the pilots da Gama had handed over Joam Machado, one of the *degradados*, as a hostage. He survived, and afterwards became quite a great man under the *Sobaio* (*Subadar*) at Goa.

They came upon a cluster of islands (the Kerimba group) troublesome to navigate, and flogged the pilot because of it. The *San Raphael* had grounded on a shoal, but got off at high tide. From very natural dislike to this he took them farther out to sea, with the result that the ships passed Quiloa (Kilwa) without seeing it, just as they had overshot Sofala. At that time the Sultan of Kilwa was overlord of Mozambique and other towns on the coast.

On Palm Sunday, April 8, they arrived off Mombasa, and a *zabra* came off to meet them. The *zabra* was the ordinary Indian undecked dhow, and it was gay with flags. This was because of the Moslem festival of *Bairam*, but the crews took it to be a welcome. The majority of the population here were *Wa-Swahili*, men of the coast-lands, as distinguished from the *Ki-Swahili*, the inlanders, both half Arab, half Bantu, but all called

## The Voyage Round Africa

Moors. It may be remarked that they are ■ very energetic race, and their language seems likely to be the *lingua franca* of East Africa, just as Kilindini, the modern deep-water port to the south, and the starting-point of the Uganda railway, can claim to be the equal of any port on that coast. The old Mombasa harbour is now used only by Indian dhows, and the Portuguese Fort Jesus is ■ ruin, and shows why the island was called the cockpit of East Africa.

The Mozambique *Xequê* was very bitter from his experience of Portuguese bombards, and he had sent to tell the "King" of Mombasa that the voyagers were Christians and pirates, who came to spy out the land, and therefore pretended friendship and gave paltry presents. That was how the *zabra* came out to meet da Gama, and the mention of paltry presents was taken as a hint. The *zabra* was estimated to be of 200 tons, and it brought some sheep and fowls, as well as sugarcane, lemons, and oranges, and a pressing invitation to come into the inner port. Da Gama, however, was suspicious. He would not allow the men of the dhow to come on board his craft, and when he was told that there were two Christians who would pilot him into the inner harbour, he was still more dubious. He did not believe in the Christianity of the two, who seem to have been ordinary Hindus, and so he sent two of his *degradados* to spy out the town. With them, according to Correa, went the "broker Davane," and four "honourable Moors" were kept as hostages on board the *San Gabriel*.

His caution seemed to be justified, for next morning, when they moved in, da Gama's ship ran aground on a shoal, and the promptness with which he dropped anchor and was copied by the other two vessels alone saved some-

## Vasco da Gama

thing worse. Moreover, the noise of the cordage and the scurrying about of the crews seemed to scare the pilots and the Mozambique men. At any rate, they all jumped overboard and made for the shore. This made the Captain-Major still more mistrustful, and he proceeded to "question" a couple of Swahili who had been seized. The questioning was made acute by pouring boiling grease, resin, and oil over them, and they made haste to tell of a plot which was to avenge the bombard-  
ing of Mozambique.

The same night *almadias* came off and tried to cut the moorings of the *Berrio* and the *San Raphael*, but they were detected, and made off without doing anything serious.

It might have been expected that da Gama would fire on the town, ■ he had bombarded Mozambique, but he did not. He had heard a great deal of Cambay and Calicut, and he wanted to get on to India.

In spite of the ill-will of the "King," the ships stayed for several days, variously stated by the chroniclers, and then they set sail for Melinde, thirty leagues off to the north. They had a pilot, but they did not trust him, so they kept him in irons for mere reference purposes, and ran along the coast, keeping a very sharp lookout and anchoring at night.

On the second day they sighted a couple of *zambuks*, and captured one of them, with "an old Moor of distinction who had a pretty wife with him." The crew jumped overboard, but were picked up by the Portuguese boats, and all were taken on as prisoners to Melinde, so that their combined information might ensure safe sailing.

Anchor was dropped off Melinde on Easter Sunday, one of the few dates given by Camoens. They found



1101 1 1142  
( )  
1101 1 1142



TAKING FRESH WATER ABOARD ON THE AFRICAN COAST, Page 28

## The Voyage Round Africa

the town quite picturesque, in ■ fine bay, with houses lined along the shore, "several stories high and pierced with many windows."

The *Roteiro* compares it with Alouchete in Portugal. The ships were at least a mile off shore, and nobody put out to meet them. Vasco da Gama therefore sent his "honourable Moor" captive on shore, though Correa says it was Davane, who had been taken on as broker. Whoever it was put the fears of the townsfolk at rest, and the Rajah sent back the old Moor "with one of the King's cavaliers and a *Sharif*," who, we are to understand, was a chief, or high officer, a direct descendant of the Prophet rather than a *Mollah*.

The message was quite satisfactory. The "King" invited the party to enter the port, promised a pilot, and said he was prepared to supply whatever was wanted. He backed this up in a carnal way with a present of fat sheep, fowls, and vegetables.

The *Capitan-Môr* sent back three wash-hand basins, two strings of coral, and a "surtout such as is worn by the Brothers of Mercy." It was not the only time that da Gama was conscious that he did not make an opulent figure.

The firing at first very naturally scared the people, but the chief sent off his *kasis*, an old man who was the principal priest at the mosque, and invited da Gama to "come and repose in one of his palaces." The Commodore, however, replied that he had strict orders from his Sovereign not to land anywhere on territory that was not on terms of alliance with Portugal. This hint at suspicion was kept up intermittently, and did a good deal to create distrust. It was very well known that the Captain-Major had landed repeatedly, and the refusal had the appearance either of a bad conscience or

## Vasco da Gama

of cowardice. The King of Melinde retorted by asking what his people would think if he accepted the invitation to visit the Portuguese ships.

A compromise was effected. The "King"—it was, apparently, not the actual ruler, who was a very aged man, but his son—arranged to come off in his *zabra* to meet da Gama, who was to be in a ship's boat. They drew up alongside one another and exchanged Oriental compliments, and as a result da Gama liberated the seventeen Arabs whom he had taken prisoner on the way up. The Melinde man said he valued this concession more than if he had been presented with a town. In return he invited all the Portuguese to come and see some trick-riding and "powder play." Accordingly, several boat-loads came and rowed along the town front and fired round shot as well as blank from their falconets, but, of course, out to sea.

The Melindians replied with the blowing of their *anafils* (here apparently Pan-pipes) and of *siwas*, trumpets of carved ivory the size of a man and blown in the middle. These *siwas*, or royal trumpets, were peculiar to the descendants of the Persians of Shiraz, who had settled on this coast in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Everything outwardly was most satisfactory, but there was mistrust on both sides. Tales from Mozambique maintained that the voyagers were flat pirates. The "Christians" of four Hindu ships that were in port said not obscurely that it would be very unwise to attach importance to these *siwa* fanfares. Therefore, when two days passed without communication, da Gama high-handedly seized a "*fidalgo*," and said he would keep him prisoner till the promised pilot came. The



## The Voyage Round Africa

pilot did come promptly enough and was, according to the chief, a Christian. Barros says his name was *Malema Canaqua*, but that means nothing definite. *Malema* is a loadsmen, and *Kanaka* is the name of a caste. He seems to have been a Gujerati, who, according to Marco Polo, were a piratical lot, but therefore all the better seafaring men.

As soon as he came on board the ships got ready to sail, in spite of warnings about the break of the monsoon. Nine days seem to have been all that they spent in Melinde.

The chief probably was glad to see them go, for the Arabs were bitter, and the Malabaris demonstrative. The Portuguese, however, were very pleased with their visit. They were full of fat mutton, and the oranges and vegetables did much to put an end to the scurvy.

### CHAPTER IV

#### CALICUT : "MOORS" AND MOPLAHS

CORREIA says that Vasco da Gama left Malindi (the modern way of spelling Melinde) "with the new moon of July," but this is certainly wrong, and the real date was April 24, 1498. The chief wanted him to stay because "it would be winter on the other side"—that is to say, the rainy season would have begun. The south-west monsoon breaks on the Malabar coast about May. The warning was right, for just when the ships had sighted the high ranges torrential rain fell, and they lost all knowledge of their whereabouts.

The land sighted was no doubt Mount D'Elly, a conspicuous landmark for "Moor and Gentile" navigators, about sixteen miles north of Cannanore. //

## Vasco da Gama

The "tornado," of which Camoens gives a vivid description, soon passed, and the ships anchored off "Capua," which the pilot mistook for Calicut. As a matter of fact, it was Kappa-Khatta, some leagues to the north. They had been twenty-three days crossing from Malindi, and the voyage from Lisbon had lasted from July 8, 1497, to May 19, 1498, ten months and eleven days. They anchored about ■ league and ■ half off shore, and four *almadias* (dugouts) came off to ask who they were and what they had come for. They pointed out where Calicut was, and da Gama sent two *degradados* to reconnoitre. At Malindi he had been warned that Calicut was a very chancy place. These scouts found it so, for they were rather brusquely received by two "Tunisians," who greeted them with: "Go to the devil, where I send ye! Who brought you here?"

This rather unpromising welcome proved, however, to be deceptive. One of the "Moors" went on board with them, and this was the Monsaide of Barros and Camoens, who figures largely in the story. His history was rather vague. Correa calls him *taibo*, which is a version of the Arabic *tayyib* (a bit of slang like the French *pxut*, or the Tongkinese *tot-lam*, and with the same meaning—"good"). Castanheda adds ■ *bom*, also with the meaning of good in Portuguese sea-patter, as the Cockney says, "a bit of alright." Monsaide is variously reported to have been a Christian child who was taken prisoner in Seville, and became "a Moor among the Moors," or a Tunisian Mahomedan, who was chief army contractor for military stores under Dom Fernando. Camoens, who styles him Felix, makes him out to be a complicated traitor who ended by being a pestilent renegade and ■ meriting Paradise."

The convict, for there is a difference of opinion as to

## Calicut: "Moors" and Moplahs

whether there was only one *degradado* instead of two, was an equally dubious person. He was a "new Christian"—i.e., a converted Jew—and he spoke a little Arabic as well as Hebrew. His name was John Nunes, though Corrêa confuses him with Joseph Martins, or so miscalls him. Anyhow, he seems to have had an insinuating way, for the Tunisian Moors took him to their house and gave him bread and honey before going off to the ships. There da Gama was congratulated on having come to a country full of rubies and emeralds: "Thank God for having brought you to a country holding such riches." •

The Rajah, who is habitually called the Samuri or Zamorin, was fifteen leagues away at Ponani, and the Captain-Major sent off two men to inform him that he had come as an ambassador from the King of Portugal, from whom he had letters. This was mere splash.

The "Zamorin" is a title whose derivation is not very clear. It appears to be taken from Samudriya Rajah, the Lord of the Sea. The same origin seems to belong to the title "Phya Samut," the Minister of the Navy in Siam, and is suggested in the Burmese Thamôddaya, the encircling ocean.

The Zamorin set off immediately for Calicut when he got da Gama's letter; and a pilot was sent to take them to Pandarani, where there was a well-sheltered anchorage.

At Pandarani Kollam, as it is now called, the *Bale*, with two hundred men, came to see him. The *Bale* was the *Wali*, the ordinary Arab title for a governor. Corrêa calls him the *Gozil* (Vizier) and Camoens the *Catual* (the *Kôtrwal* of these days is a police officer or native town magistrate).

The *Wali* announced that the Zamorin would grant an audience, and so on May 28, nine days after his

## Vasco da Gama

striking land, the Captain-Major set out for Calicut. He took an escort of twelve or thirteen marines, and was carried the fifteen miles or so in a palanquin. The writer of the *Roteiro* was one of this escort, but whether he was Alvarez Velho or another cannot be determined.

At the port the escort were regaled with "rice, much butter, and excellent broiled fish," but the *Capitan-Môr* would not eat anything. The party then got on board a kind of raft, made of two boats lashed together, and went about a league up a river (the Elatur), only to land and get into a palanquin again, and they passed through the town, where there was a "countless multitude" of sightseers. Marco Polo says "there is not a tailor in the whole province of Malabar, because they all go naked."

A halt was made at a "church," where the Portuguese prayed while a native band clashed with gongs and shrilled on *anafil* trumpets and mouth-organs. This was clearly a Hindu temple. The details given, especially the portraits of "saints" on the walls, among them the elephant-god Ganesha with his four arms, were distinctly Hindu. The "sanctuary" with the image of a woman and a child, which they told one another represented Our Lady, may have been Krishna and his mother Devaki. The crowns were taken to be halos, the "holy water" with which they were sprinkled may have been from the Ganges, but the "white clay" that was given them for the *tilka* mark on the forehead was certainly Brahminical, and so was the triple cord of the twice-born, the *dvisa*, "like the stole of our deacons."

A *Nair*, one of the Malabar fighting caste, brother of the *Wali*, made his appearance and cleared a way for them through the *dhoti*-clad rabble to the Palace, where they were taken to a "small court," at the farther side of ■



## Calicut : "Moors" and Moplahs

courtyard of great size with four gates, through which they passed, not hesitating to give many blows to the people, and generally scuffling through. At the last gate they were met by a "little old man who holds a position like that of a bishop," and he ushered them in.

The Zamorin beckoned to them to come near, but da Gama and his party set themselves on a stone bench opposite. Water for their hands was brought, and then fruit, one kind that "resembled ■ melon and another that was like ■ fig and tasted very nice." (These were the humble jackfruit and bananas, or plantains as they are called in India.) ■

The Zamorin was "eating" what they took to be *uvas* (grapes), which clearly was areca-nut, and chewing *atambor* (betel vine-leaf). He was stretched out on a mattress covered with a sheet of cotton stuff "whiter and finer than any linen." Calicut has fallen far from its estate as second only to Goa on the west coast, but it still produces quantities of the calico which got its name from the port. Cochin took its place owing to the repeated conflicts between the Portuguese and the Zamorin, and the establishment of Portuguese headquarters at Cochin until Goa was taken hastened the eclipse. The Portuguese built quays and wharves and store-sheds, and these in their turn were blown up by the East India Company to prevent Cochin falling into the hands of the Dutch.

The *Roteiro* chronicler and the Portuguese generally were new to Eastern ways, and were therefore impressed by the gold spittoon which "the King held in his left hand," by the many silver jugs and the gilt canopy. It is not to be credited that the Rajah dispensed with a spittoon-bearer, especially as "the vessel seemed to be solid and was estimated as capable of holding seven

## Vasco da Gama

pints." Everything, however, was novel, and the Zamorin's equally malapert interest in his visitors, the languid way in which he inspected them, and the remarks which he made to the fan and betel and spittoon bearers, must have been very disconcerting, and especially his amused smile at the gratification with which they ate the "apples of Paradise," as Marco Polo calls bananas.

After this mutual inspection, the Zamorin invited Vasco da Gama to address the assembled courtiers and to tell them why he had come and what he wanted. These courtiers were "men of much distinction," and would repeat to him, in suitable language, what he had to say.

Upon this the Commadore gave a highly coloured statement of the majesty, resources, and virtues of King Manoel. That Monarch had regularly, for sixty years or more, sent out vessels to find the Christian kings of India of whom he had heard, but so far had not been able to find, though some of his ships had been out for two years at a time. Correa says that da Gama told the Rajah that he himself had sailed from Lisbon with a fleet of sixty ships, but a storm had scattered them and he was still sailing about in the hopes of collecting them again. This seems to be romancing on Correa's part. Vasco da Gama had queer ideas of diplomacy, and had no more regard for the truth than seemed to be profitable; but it is hardly likely that he would be so foolish as to make assertions of this kind when the Arabs were so hostile to him and ships from Mozambique and Mombasa had freely denounced the Portuguese as adventurers in any case and probably pirates. The *Roteiro* makes no assertion of the kind, and when Correa wrote he and the Portuguese generally had become vainglorious.

The Zamorin listened tolerantly. Malabar was noted



VASCO DA GAMA





## Calicut: "Moors" and Moplahs

for its pirates. Marco Polo mentioned them two hundred years before, and Mount D'Ely was a special centre for them. These pirates, Marco said, were of a curiously amiable kind. They killed nobody, but took all they could lay hands on and then dismissed the crews with an invitation to come back again with more goods and a sporting chance of escaping capture. "The Pirate Coast" was notorious till a matter of a hundred years ago.

The Zamorin therefore seems to have treated da Gama and his party as plausible pirates. The audience, at any rate, lasted a long time, and it was ten o'clock at night before they left the Palace. Correa gives as lengthy an account of it as if he had been there taking shorthand notes. The gist of it was that the King of Portugal was a master of many countries and had abundance of gold and silver. He did not want these. What he did want was "Christians and spice." The Zamorin was much the most powerful Rajah on the west coast, and it is surprising that he listened so patiently and was content to say that he was prepared to accept Dom Manoel as a friend and a brother.

In spite of his fair words, however, the party was callously bowed out of the Palace in a desperate rain-squall. The Zamorin had indeed asked da Gama whether he would rather lodge "with Christians than with Moors." The supposed Christians were, of course, Hindus, and the Captain-Major, from what he had seen, said he did not fancy either and would prefer a lodging to himself. The Rajah simply listened and said the Court officials would see about it.

The way was long; the streets were as crowded as ever, but they were swimming with water, and the *palki* men slithered about in a way that the Captain-Major did

## Vasco da Gama

not like. He therefore asked for some shelter till the downpour ended, and he was taken to "the factor's" house. This factor, who was no doubt the *Wali*, after a time produced a horse, but it had no saddle. That was quite usual with the people of the country, but it annoyed da Gama, and he refused to ride it. It does not appear that it was intended as a slight, but the Portuguese thought it was. In the end, after much trouble, they got back to Pandarani.

Next day the presents for the Zamorin were "set out on handkerchiefs" for the inspection of the *Wali* and a party of the chief Arabs. The *Roteiro* carefully records them. There were twelve pieces of striped cotton, four scarlet hoods, six hats, four strings of coral, a case of six wash-hand basins, a case of sugar, two casks of oil and two of honey. These things were all very well for "Caffres"—Hottentots and Bantu and even Swahili—but they were far from being what it was usual to offer to Indian potentates. The *Wali* and his party were so taken aback that they did not seem able to show the ordinary Oriental courtesy. In fact, their amazement went perilously near laughter, and it was impossible not to see it. Therefore da Gama rather ill-advisedly explained that these gifts were from him personally and not from the great Western King, and, worse still, went on to say that he himself was not a merchant but an ambassador, and in that capacity he claimed to have another audience.

Da Gama at the time was staying in a sort of rest-house, or caravanserai, on the sea-front. It was therefore easy for him to press his claim on the *Wali* and other Palace officials. They could not make any engagement for the Rajah, so they were very profuse in promises and got out of the way. That afternoon, however, some

## Calicut : "Moors" and Moplahs

merchants of the town made their appearance and did not attempt to hide their amusement or their sneers.

Next morning a party of men came. It is not clear whether they were Hindu troops, warriors of the *Nair* caste, or whether they were Arabs. They escorted the Commodore to the Palace, and there he had to wait four hours in an ante-room. This is a very common way with Orientals to assert their dignity, and it certainly was not soothing to a "cholerick man" like da Gama.

When at last the Commodore was admitted only two of his party were allowed to enter with him, a further snub. These were Fernan Martins, the *degradado*, because he talked a mosaic of Arabic and heathen tongues, and Diego Dias, the purser of the *San Gabriel*, a brother of Bartholomeu, and shortly after to be appointed to the charge of the goods set on shore at the Pandarani factory.

The Rajah's reception of da Gama was very chilly. This was not kingly, it was disciplinary. He began by saying that he had expected a "duty" visit the day before. The Captain-Major, instead of asking whose fault that was, rather weakly remarked that it was a long way to Pandarani. The Zamorin then went on to say that he had heard a great deal of the magnificence of the country the "ambassador" came from, but he had seen nothing of the presents customary to be presented on such missions. Then he rather irrelevantly remarked that he had heard there was a golden image of Santa Maria as a figurehead on the flagship. The implication was that he would not mind accepting that, but da Gama testily said that the image was not gold, and even if it had been, he would not part with it, for Santa Maria had guided him across the seas and would guide him back again.

## Vasco da Gama

By this time not only the Captain-Major, but the Portuguese generally, had quite begun to realize that the Mussulmans were not only personally hostile, but were working against him with the Zamorin, who was quite the feckless sort of person ~~that the~~ majority of Eastern potentates are. Da Gama, therefore, was not surprised when the Rajah abruptly asked him where the letter from King Manoel was, the letter he had spoken of. He replied that he had two letters, one in Portuguese and the other in Arabic (the Morisco or Moroccan dialect), but he stipulated that a Christian should be called in to read the Arabic letter. This was agreed to, but when "a young man of small stature, called Quaram," appeared, it turned out that though he could speak Arabic, he could not read it. Consequently the letter was handed over to four Moors, who got through it among them and translated it to the Zamorin. It seems likely that the letter was drawn up with the idea that it would be handed to Prester John, but at any rate it proved acceptable to the chiefly dignity, and da Gama was told that he might go on board and discharge what cargo he had for sale.

By this time it was quite late, so the Portuguese went back to their lodgings, and found that no arrangements had been made for their conveyance to Pandarani. Da Gama was taken in at the house of a wealthy merchant "of the name of Guzerate," which, of course means that he was a Gujarati, and so possibly a friend of the pilot who had brought them over from Malindi.

Next morning a horse was brought, but again there was no saddle, and da Gama demanded "a horse of the country"—that is to say, a palanquin. The *palki* n started off at the regulation lope, and "we others, not being able to keep up with them, were left behind."



11/11/11

11/11/11



THE MERCHANTS OF CAIRO HELD AS HOSTAGES. Page 46

## Calicut : “ Moors ” and Moplahs

The *Wali* caught them up and passed on without telling them about the road, so that they missed their way, and it was after sunset when they reached Pandarani, and at sunset it is only a stride off the dark. Da Gama demanded an *almadia* to take him on board, and when the Vizier objected, seems to have used such nautical language that the harassed official said he should have thirty dugouts if he wanted them. So they set off for the beach, but there was nothing to be seen there, though Coelho had orders to stand by with the ship's boats. The Commodore sent off three of his party to look for him. They wandered about, were misdirected, and nothing was seen of them till next day.

When they did appear, da Gama again asked for an *almadia*. There was a good deal of whispering, and then the *Wali* said the boats would be forthcoming if orders were sent off that the ships were to come inshore. The Portuguese immediately suspected that this meant a plot to surround them in port and overpower the crews with numbers, so da Gama broke out again and insisted that he must go back “to see the King, who was a Christian like himself.” The Vizier listened blandly, and said that it would be attended to, but instead of making arrangements for the journey, he had the doors closed upon them—they were in what in India is called a travellers' bungalow. Not only were the gates of the enclosure shut, but the place was surrounded by armed men.

This threatening attitude was followed up by a demand that the ships' sails and rudders should be given up. Correa says that all these provocations were prompted by the Arabs, who wanted to exasperate the Portuguese to some act of violence which would warrant the massacre of the whole party.

## Vasco da Gama

They were no doubt thoroughly angry, but they were also alarmed, so da Gama sent off a secret message to Coelho, who was inshore looking for him, to stand out to the ships and tell Paulo da Gama to keep a vigilant watch, and what we should call clear for action.

For the whole of the next day they were not only confined to their quarters, but were not allowed into the small tiled court, and at night the guard over them was raised to a hundred armed men, "all with swords, two-edged battle-axes, shields, and bows and arrows." Next day the tension was relieved. The *Catual*, as Camoens calls him, came to say that, since da Gama had agreed to land his merchandise, according to the custom of the country, he would be allowed to return to his ship when the goods had been landed. The Commodore promptly wrote off to his brother to send a selection of the commodities—they could hardly be called the cargo—and this Paulo immediately did, and, as a result, the Captain-Major was allowed to reimbark. Diego Dias and Alvaro de Brago, as factor and assistant factor, were left on shore in charge of what had been landed, but when he got on board, da Gama stopped all further discharge, and he seemed to have reason for it, for, though Arab merchants came to look at the goods on shore, they merely scoffed at them and "spat upon the ground." These were no doubt the Moplahs, who had most of the trade in their hands, and, as the result of marriages between daughters of the land and men from Muscat and Oman, as well as Turks and Egyptians, spoke all the languages of the State, and, besides bringing in a great deal of money, were so much more warlike than the native Hindus that the Rajah hesitated to give orders to them.

After five days on board da Gama wrote to the



## Calicut : "Moors" and Moplahs

Zamorin. He had set out for his ship, as the Rajah desired, but had been unwarrantably detained ; he had discharged cargo, but the merchants who came to inspect it simply laughed and bought nothing. The Zamorin replied at once : the men who had detained the Captain were "bad Christians" and would be punished." This was the way in which a fretful child would be soothed, and the seven or eight merchants whom the Chief sent from Calicut behaved precisely as the independent visitors before them had done, but the Chief was more considerate. After eight more days the goods were carried by his orders to Calicut, and permission was given to the crews to land and see the city. They were to do this by twos and threes in rotation, so that all might have their turn on shore, to buy or sell on their own account.

Friction steadily increased. Da Gama sent, by the hands of Diego Dias, a message and some presents to the Zamorin. The message was ignored and the presents were sent back—a flagrant insult.

Diego Dias wrote secretly that he and his assistant were no better than prisoners, and that a "Moor of the country," ■ Moplah, had plainly told him that the people of Calicut were resolved to make an end of the whole party of Portuguese as soon as ■ fleet, which was expected "from Mecca," should arrive. The ships would probably have left if it had not been for the south-west monsoon—the winter, as the Portuguese called it—but the weather was too heavy for such small craft.

A crisis was reached when the Rajah announced formally that, before the ships were allowed to go, a sum of 600 *xerafins* would have to be paid for port dues, "according to the custom of the country." A *xerafin*

## Vasco da Gama

was worth about seven shillings and fivepence. The factor and his assistant were to be detained as pledges.

For some unexplained reason, twenty-five merchants went on board the fleet. Da Gama made prisoners of nineteen of them, and of these nineteen six were "honourable men"—that is to say, *Nairs*. The remaining six were sent on shore with a letter to the *Wali*, saying that the nineteen would not be given up till Diego Dias and his assistant were allowed to go.

Four days later the three ships stood out to sea, and it was announced that they had set out on the return voyage to Portugal. This was on August 23, and the ships had not gone far when a head wind drove them back, and they anchored off Calicut itself for a full day, and then on the 25th sailed again, and went so far that they were out of sight of land.

Apparently the "Moor of Tunis," the Monsaide of Correa, had been active in representing that it was not wise to provoke the Portuguese too far. At any rate, "while the ships were waiting for a sea-breeze," a barque came out with a letter from the Zamorin to say that he had been misled by the *Wali*; that he would send off Diego Dias and his assistant against the hostages held by da Gama; that he would set up a *padram*, if the pillar was sent to him; and wound up by urging the Captain-Major to stay on in Calicut till his cargo was sold.

Da Gama considered this to be bluff, as his own cruising off the port had been bluff, and he did nothing. On August 27 seven boats put off from the shore, bringing the two Portuguese but none of the cargo which had been left in their charge. In recognition of this the Commodore handed over "the six most distinguished of the prisoners," but kept the remaining six,

## Calicut: "Moors" and Moplahs

as the *Roteiro* records (though there were apparently only five), ■ ■ pledge for the goods on shore. He did not fail, however, to send the pillar with the cross and the royal arms.

This party had no sooner gone than the "Moor of Tunis" came on board and begged to be taken away. He was not safe on shore, he said, because he was considered to be a Christian and the friend of Christians. He also repeated the story of the Mecca fleet that was sure to come with the change to the north-east monsoon. The advice seemed good, so da Gama hoisted sail, taking the hostages with him, and left a parting message that he would soon come back again and show Calicut that he was not a pirate.

The *Roteiro* says he had been ninety-six days at, or near, Calicut. Correa makes it about seventy, and Barros seventy-four. These figures show how difficult it is to fix dates. What does appear certain, however, is that between the time when Mount D'Ely was first sighted and the date when the ships set out to cross the Indian Ocean, one hundred and forty-one days were spent on the west coast of India.

The *Roteiro* has not a great deal to say about Calicut. Probably the sailors on shore leave spent most of their time in the bazaars, and the inquisitive crowds prevented them from going far. Da Gama himself can have seen little from his palanquin, and less when he was walking back to Pandarani in the dark. There is, however, ■ letter from Girolamo Sernigi, a Florentine merchant who had settled in Lisbon and was there when the expedition returned, and wrote to a friend in Florence what details he had gathered from the crews.

"It is ■ large city, he says, larger than Lisbon, and "inhabited by Christians and called Challichut. There

## Vasco da Gama

were churches with bells, but no priests, and the divine offices were not performed, nor Masses celebrated. There were many Moorish merchants who had all the trade in their hands, and they had a fine mosque in the 'square of the town.' " He adds that "the King is, as it were, governed by these Moors, because of the presents which they give him; and owing to their industry, for they had the entire sea trade, the government is wholly in their hands, for these Christians are coarse people."

During the three months the Portuguese were there, 1,500 Moorish vessels arrived "in search of spices." The largest of them did not exceed 800 tons, and they were of all sorts, large and small. "Having only one mast they can make headway with the wind astern." They were therefore entirely dependent on the monsoon winds. Sernigi was told that they were badly built, without nails or iron, "for they have to pass over the lodestone, and they carried neither arms nor artillery." At Calicut they were drawn up on the beach, for the port was not safe for them. Most of the dhows took their spices up the Red Sea to "the House of Mecca" (Jeddah), and then the cargoes were taken overland past the fort of Mount Sinai and so on to Cairo. Many caravans were lost in desert sand-storms.

In a later letter, when Sernigi had met Gaspar da Gama (the renegade whom the fleet picked up at Anjediva), he tells his friend that there were many "Gentiles" but few Christians on the Malabar coast, except at Cochin, where there were Syrian Christians (Nestorians), and "the supposed churches and belfries are in reality temples of idolatry."

The Portuguese generally did not find this out till after the voyage of Pedro Alvares da Cabral, some years later.



# The Return Voyage

## CHAPTER V

### THE RETURN VOYAGE AND TWO FURTHER SAILINGS

WHILE the three Portuguese ships anchored in a calm a league away from Calicut, a fleet of about seventy *tones* came after them (the *tone* was a rowing-boat with the planks sewn together with rattan, much the same as the craft elsewhere called *sustas*). They were crowded with men wearing a sort of cuirass made of red cloth folded. There was not much doubt that they had come out to rescue the men whom da Gama had carried off as a pledge for the cargo detained on shore, so he opened fire on them without waiting for any communication. The *tones* made haste to turn back to the port, and a squall which opportunely broke out, carried the Portuguese ships out to sea.

Camoens in his *Lusiads*, instead of following da Gama's journey home, takes the crews to the Isle of Love. This was quite in the classical style of the time, when Homer and Virgil were the models for poets. The Isle of Love was certainly not Anjediva, as some stolid, matter-of-fact writers have assumed. Sir Richard Burton was convinced that if it had any other existence than the poet's imagination it must have been Zanzibar.

Camoens had met Gaspar Correa in Malacca, where the chronicler, after marrying a wife, had settled down, and no doubt the poet read the manuscript of *Lendas da India* and heard more in conversation. The journey out was new and interesting; the return covered much the same places and had no interest to any but those who were going home, and certainly did not lend itself to poetry and the exaltation of the Lusitanians. Therefore the poet gives up da Gama and tells of his successors.

## Vasco da Gama

Camoens, who had been holding a grotesque post in Macao as "Trustee for the Defunct and Absent," was arrested for debt, and ordered to return to Malacca. On his voyage there he was wrecked in a typhoon somewhere near Cap St. Jacques at the mouth of the Mekhong river, and lost everything but the clothes he had on and the manuscript of the *Lusiads*. He got to Malacca in some way not recorded, either as a marine or as a sailor before the mast. There he borrowed money again from another harpy, like the Goa man, *Fios Siccos* (dry threads), who was the beginning of his troubles.

From Malacca he went to Goa, where he was promptly thrown into gaol. Old friends whom he had known in his old Court days in Lisbon got him out, but he was never the same man again. Goa Gaol in those days was a nightmare. After some miscellaneous appointments, he set out for Lisbon after fourteen years in the East, only to be clapped in gaol again at Mozambique. During his year's imprisonment there he worked hard at the *Lusiads*, and very possibly visions of the Isle of Love helped him to survive. He was born in the year when da Gama died, but he makes the discoverer of the sea-route to India the pattern of all the chivalrous valour which glorified the heroes of the great days of Portugal. Most dramatically he died, "not only in his fatherland, but with his fatherland," when King Sebastian was killed in the mad Morocco enterprise and the "sixty years' captivity began." Camoens apparently died in a hospital and had lived his last few years in abject poverty, but his name is inseparably bound up with Vasco da Gama's and makes the none-too-attractive explorer into a hero of romance.

The Isle of Love episode has been variously regarded.

## The Return Voyage

Voltaire, of all people, thought it improper. The idea of nymphs fondling tar-smeared sailors shocked him, but it is handled as delicately as the infatuation of Queen Titania for Bully Bottom.

The journey home of the explorers was very far from being poetical. The three ships headed northward, hugging the land, but taking all the advantage that was to be had from the land and sea breezes. The idea was apparently to get as much northing as possible, in order to have the full benefit of the change of monsoon to the north-east. Correa, indeed, says the flotilla called in at Cannanore, and that the da Gama brothers landed and saw the chief, and he gives his usual long record of conversations; but the *Roteiro* and the other chroniclers have nothing to say about it. It is true that a considerable quantity of spices was taken to Lisbon, and Correa says this was shipped at Cannanore, and there is no mention of any shipments elsewhere.

There is, however, general agreement that the ships called in at the island of St. Mary, about two leagues off the shore, and set up a *padram* "at the request of the people." It appears that there were three special pillars put on board by King Manoel, for though there is mention of others, these three are particularly recorded. The first was the San Raphael at the mouth of the Rio das bon Signaes (the Kilimani River); the second was the San Gabriel, landed at Calicut, but as da Gama suspected, never set up; and this last, named the Santa Maria. No doubt the Commodore wanted a record of his visit to the west coast of India, and the "request" of the islanders was mere eye-wash.

Whether they put in at Cannanore or not, it is certain that the ships went on to Anjediva (a corruption of the Hindustani *Panch Dwipa*, the Five Islands). Here,

## Vasco da Gama

twelve leagues south of Goa, they had exciting experiences. The *San Gabriel* and the *Berrio* were beached to have their bottoms cleaned, but the *San Raphael* was not. The reason seems to have been because eight vessels were seen from the mast-head. The people on the island, who were quite friendly and were "Christians," said these were part of the fleet of Timoja, a notorious pirate, and that they had been urged by the Zamorin to destroy the Portuguese ships. Da Gama was to come across Timoja again, at Hunawar, on his second voyage, but just then he merely resented anything that might delay his homeward journey, so without more ado he opened fire on these ships and they faded away.

They were not done with alarms, however. While the two ships were on the beach, some *fustas*, the local galleys, appeared, flying flags and rowing to the sound of drums and "bagpipes." The fisher-folk declared that these also were sea-thieves, which is probable enough, for Marco Polo had said that the Gujeratis were arrant pirates. Da Gama therefore promptly used his bombards on them.

Next day there came on board an individual who spoke Venetian fluently. He said he was *Shahbandar* (Port Officer) to the *Sabayo* of Goa, who was Governor of the island under the Rajah of Bijapur, and that he had been a Christian, but for business purposes had become a Moslem. He was well dressed and well spoken, and said that he had been commissioned by the *Sabayo* (which is the Portuguese version of *Subadar*) to ask if these "Francos" would take service with him.

This person is variously described as a Granadine Jew, a Levantine Christian, and a Hebrew of Sarmata. He was altogether too plausible, and when Paulo da



## The Return Voyage

Gama asked the fishermen if they knew anything about him they said he was a buccancer and a spy. Therefore he was "questioned"—that is to say, he was strung up and flogged with intermittences. He does not seem to have admitted anything then, but when they were two hundred leagues out at sea he said that he had been sent out to entice the Portuguese ships into Goa, where they could be captured.

Da Gama took him home to Portugal, where he was converted or reconverted, and took the name of Gaspar da Gama, with Vasco as his godfather. Gaspar da las Indias, as he came to be called, repeatedly accompanied expeditions to India, and King Manoel liked him so much that he appointed him a cavalier of the household.

The careening and scraping of the ships took twelve days, and during this time the Portuguese boats made a night attack on the Goanese *fustas*, took them by surprise, firing "powder-pots" into them, hacked and stabbed most of the crews who tried to escape to the islands where the boats had been hidden, and handed over what remained of the *fustas* to the fishermen.

Then, on October 5, they left Anjediva for the African coast. Anjediva had a connection with the East India Company. In 1622, when Bombay Island was ceded by Portugal, Sir Abraham Shipman with 500 soldiers landed there. The climate was pestilential and killed the commander and all of the garrison except two officers and 190 men. Anjediva also for a time served as a sort of penal settlement for Goa, Daman, and Diu.

The voyage across the Indian Ocean took three months, less three days, and there was another serious outbreak of scurvy, and thirty men died of it. This left only seven or eight men to work the ships, and even

## Vasco da Gama

these were really unfit. At last, on January 2, 1499, they sighted land and hoped that it was Mozambique.

They saw a number of two-storied houses and a central palace surrounded by a balisade. Da Gama was in a very irritable state, and his hatred of the "Moors" was steadily growing, so without more ado he bombarded the town, which was really Magadoxo (Muk Dishu). The "stone and mortar houses" so often referred to were merely built of corallines, and probably suffered badly. There was, perhaps, a warranty for his high-handedness, for eight *almadias*, full of armed men, put out from Pate not far off. He promptly opened fire on them too and scattered them.

The ships went on, anchoring at night, and on January 8 they reached Malindi. The Sheikh received them most cordially, and sent sheep and fruit on board, but scurvy still carried off some of the men. Correa, as usual, gives details of lengthy conversations, but the chief point was that an ivory carved horn was presented for the King of Portugal, a magnificent neck-chain set with pearls and precious stones for the Queen, as well as a silver and ivory casket and many rings. In return, the Commodore gave what had been brought for trade and was not worth taking home to Portugal: coral, pieces of cloth, a chest full of mirrors, red barret caps, and strings of crystalline beads of many colours, "which looked very pretty." More important was the Sheikh's acceptance of a *padram*, and the deputation to Lisbon of a young man as an ambassador. The pillar was duly set up, but the Mombasa Arabs were very bitter about it, so it was moved from the promontory, and when Cabral came in 1501 it was found to be stowed away in the Palace. There is a pillar with a cross on the top of it at Malindi now, but not da Gama's.

## The Return Voyage

Malindi, in any case, is nothing like what it then was. Later Portuguese treated it shamefully, and the chief had to fly his capital. Still later, the Gallas from Somaliland raided it, and left it a heap of ruins. It was not till very long after, in the twentieth century, that the ruins of the ancient city of Gedi were discovered, ten miles inland from the port. There is no hint of it in the old chronicles, and it remains to be discovered who the builders were. Vasco da Gama owed a very great deal to Malindi, and not the least debt was the water-tanks which he had constructed for the ships. These were entirely put together by "carpenters of the country." They were made of planks "sewn together strongly with coir thread, and caulked with pitch in such a way that they were more watertight than the casks" which the Portuguese had brought out with them. Also they were made to measure to fit the ships below deck, and placed at the foot of the main-mast. Each of these tanks held "thirty pipes of water," and each ship had four tanks. It seems probable that this method, which the Arabs had developed from long voyages in the Indian Ocean, was adopted by the Portuguese, for we hear no more of water famines on this or other voyages.

The flotilla stayed five days at Malindi, and then sailed south, passing close to Mombasa, until they reached the *Baixos de San Raphael*, now known as the Mtangata Reefs, and here the *San Raphael* was burnt. The crews had been so reduced that both ships could not be navigated. The figurehead of the *San Raphael* was taken home and kept for a long time by the da Gama family as an heirloom. It is now in the great church at Belem.

At San Jorje off Mozambique another *padram* was set up on "Mass Island," and from there they went on in stormy weather, in one stretch, as far as San Bras.

## Vasco da Gama

After a halt of nine days they sailed, but were driven back by contrary winds. Still, on March 20, they were able to double the Cape, and found the cold very great after the heat of the Equator.

A good stern wind then carried them north for twenty-seven days to the neighbourhood of San Thiago, and on April 25 they reached the shallows of the Rio Grande. This is really an arm of the sea, and figures on charts as the Orange Channel.

The chroniclers differ as to what happened after this. The *Roteiro* journal ends abruptly at the Rio Grande. One account says a squall of the kind common on the West African coast in August, separated the ships, and Coelho, in the *Berrio*, went on to Lisbon, while da Gama put in to San Thiago, and there hired a caravel to take him and his sick brother Paulo to the Azores, while he left the clerk, John da Sa, in charge of the *San Gabriel*.

All agree that Paulo died of consumption the day after they reached Terceira, and this no doubt delayed his brother.

At any rate, it was the end of August, or the beginning of September, when Vasco da Gama reached home and made his triumphal entry into Lisbon, somewhere about September 18. He had reached Belem a week or ten days earlier, and offered memorial Masses for his brother. If we accept the probable dates the voyage had covered two years, two months, and ten days. Of the 170 who had sailed from Belem only fifty-five men returned.

King Manoel at the first interview showed his appreciation by pointedly greeting *Dom* Vasco. Sir Richard Burton says that this *Dom* corresponds to the strict original dignity of Esquire, but it was more than that, for it was a hereditary title conferred "on the whole of his lineage," and including the explorer's



## The Return Voyage

younger brother Ayres and his sister Donna Tareyja (Theresa).

The Queen was delighted with the necklace and rings and especially with the ambergris presented by the Malindi chief, and the King himself was not slow to see the certainty of wealth and the possibilities of empire.

He wrote to Ferdinand (his father-in-law) and Isabella, telling them of the voyage and of the "Christian people, not as yet strong in the faith, but thoroughly conversant with it," and of the hopes of destroying the Moors of those regions, who were as dangerous to humanity as the *Rumés*, which was the name given to the Turks. He also wrote to the Cardinal Protector asking him to thank His Holiness for the "Apostolical grants" made to him in a Bull of Alexander VI., dated Rome, 1502, and at the same time assumed, and got sanction for, the high-sounding title of: "King, by the grace of God of Portugal and the Algarves, both on this side the sea and beyond it in Africa, Lord of Guinea, and of the Conquest, Navigation, and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India."

The King behaved with great liberality to the crews. In addition to all their back pay and the customs-free landing of what they had brought home, he ordered that "to each man should be given ten pounds of each spice for their wives to divide with their gossips and friends." This was distinctly generous, because at that time the quintal of pepper was worth in Lisbon 80 *cruzadoes*; of cinnamon, 180; of cloves, 200; of ginger, 120; of mace, 300; and the quintal of nutmeg, 100. In addition, Manoel made large offerings to the monastery at Belem and to other holy houses and convents of nuns. "The dead were not forgotten, and their relatives received equal donations.

## Vasco da Gama

Vasco da Gama was naturally consulted on all the schemes which King Manoel began to develop. The assumption of his grandiose title was obviously a direct challenge to the cities of the Levant, including Alexandria. These had, up to this, monopolized the overland trade with the Far East, and Manoel's claim was the shadow of the decline in prosperity which was to begin for Venice, Genoa, Ragusa, Amalfi, and Pisa, and to be transferred to Western Europe.

The returned explorer did not confine himself to advice. He very soon began the persistent agitation for the place among the territorial nobles which he considered his due. His first claim was that he should be made Lord of Sines, his native town. The King offered no objections, but Sines belonged to the Order of San Thiago, of which Dom Jorge, Duke of Coimbra, a natural son of King John II., was Master, and he refused to part with it, even though a papal dispensation was received in 1501 empowering the Order to exchange Sines for some other place. So Dom Vasco went on urging and grumbling.

The King in the meantime acted with great energy to justify his title. Six months after Dom Vasco's return, on March 9, 1500, thirteen powerfully armed ships sailed from Lisbon under the command of Pedro Alvares Cabral, with priests, merchants, and skilled gunners. The veteran, Bartholomeu Dias, went with the fleet, designated to establish a factory at the port of Sofala. On his advice, not less than that of Dom Vasco, Cabral steered far west, and on April 22 came upon a new land, which he called Terra da Santa Cruz, but which very soon came to be known as Brazil. There is a suggestion that it had been equally accidentally discovered in 1447 or 1448, in the time of Henry the



III KAJAH RECEBES DA GAMA AL CANNANORI Page 67

10. 11. 17

10. 11. 17



## The Return Voyage

Navigator, but it is not clearly established. Towards the end of May the fleet reached the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope and was caught in a violent storm. Four ships foundered, and in one of them was Bartholomeu Dias, not far from the Cabo Tormentoso which he had been the first to round. Cabral did not get his scattered ships together for several weeks, and consequently he struck the south-west monsoon in the Indian Ocean. The wind was favourable, but the weather was not. Therefore it was September before he reached Calicut. He had an immediate interview with the Zamorin and obtained permission to set up a factory, but the Moplahs were determined now to have no rivals in trade. They had the wild blood on the fathers' side of all the pirates and adventurers from the Hejaz down to Java and the Moluccas. They were bold seamen and fanatical Moslems, and they very soon forced quarrels on the Portuguese in the factory. A mob of them rushed the settlement and killed everyone in it. There were, at any rate, forty-one Portuguese, and two of them were friars, and the head factor, Ayres Correia, perished with them. Cabral took immediate revenge. He seized and burnt fifteen ships in the harbour, eight large and seven small, put to death the crews of ten prizes which he had made, and bombarded the town for two days until the wooden houses took fire and five hundred townspeople perished.

Then he sailed south to Cochin, where the chief, though a vassal of the Zamorin, received him well and gave permission for the building of a factory. The Rajah of Cochin was a Hindu, and he remained friendly to the Portuguese throughout, and Cochin became the headquarters of Portuguese trade until Goa was taken.

From Cochin Cabral sailed north to Cannanore,

## Vasco da Gama

loaded up pepper, and sailed for Lisbon, where he arrived on the last day of July, 1501. He had left a few ships to cruise on the east coast of Africa, and the senior captain, Sancho da Toar, became quite friendly with the Sofala chief, Sheikh Yusuf.

Manoel was now quite enthusiastic about this sea route, and before Cabral's return, in the March of 1501, he had fitted out and dispatched four ships ~~under the~~ command of John da Nova, who afterwards proved a very insubordinate person and ruined Albuquerque's first attack on Ormuz. Da Nova met and defeated a Calicut squadron, loaded up very full cargoes of spices, but otherwise did not distinguish himself, though on his voyage home he discovered Conception Island, now called Ascension and St. Helena.

These two ventures had been very profitable, but they had not done much to forward Manoel's ambition to set up an empire all round the Indian Ocean.

## CHAPTER VI

### SECOND VOYAGE

KING MANOEL now prepared to justify his title of Lord of the Conquest, Navigation, and Commerce of India and the countries round about it, and he got together another fleet of fifteen vessels. This was to have been commanded by Pedro Alvares Cabral, but when it sailed it was with Dom Vasco in command. The change was due ostensibly to the King, but from the vague accounts we have in the histories it would seem to have been brought about by insidious hints from da Gama. Manoel was very pleased with the great consignments of spices, but he wanted glory as well as gold. He said

## Second Voyage

that Cabral was an excellent seaman, but not very fortunate in affairs of the sea. He had lost seven ships out of thirteen. Dom Vasco said meditatively that he did not seem to be very fortunate on the land either. He harped on his own "arrest" by the Zamorin and the general contumely that he had endured, and he concluded that because Calicut was not punished he had committed ~~the still~~ greater crime of murdering half a hundred Portuguese seamen. The bombardment of the town by Cabral was ignored, and the chief appeared to be as arrogant as ever. The Queen also, who had received no necklace and jewellery from Cabral, said openly that Dom Vasco was the fortunate Commander, and that it was clearly he who should have the command of this new venture.

King Manoel put it very tactfully to Cabral, who was "a man of a gentle disposition," and was, moreover, quite aware of the intrigues going on, so when it was suggested, he said: "Sire, if the will of Your Highness is done, that is my glory." He was taken at his word, and Cabral, who had annexed Brazil for Portugal, vanishes from history, and if he voyaged at all, did so on the west coast of Africa.

King Manoel, who is labelled "The Fortunate" in the history books, had married Isabella, whose first husband, heir to the throne of Spain, had been killed by a fall from his horse, and Manoel had visions of uniting Spain with Portugal under himself or his issue. He was not fortunate in his marriages. Isabella was aggressively pious, and practised ostentatious penances, until she became "drier than a withered stock." As a condition of her marriage she insisted that the Jews of Portugal should be murdered, forcibly baptized, or exiled, and Manoel agreed with a shrug. Her asceticism

## Vasco da Gama

killed her in nineteen months, and the widower, still with the Iberian kingdom as his aim, got papal authority to marry the younger sister, Mary, which also proved ■ disappointment, because an elder sister married and had a considerable family, one of whom became Charles V. The Pope, as a matter of form, and Isabella, as a fervent daughter of the Church, had been greatly shocked by the death of two friars in the Calicut factory massacre, and da Gama's fierce denunciation of the Moors and the Zamorin no doubt helped to bring about the supercession of Cabral.

Accordingly, now with the title of Admiral, he started on his second voyage on February 10, 1502, six weeks or more ahead of the additional vessels under the command of his nephew, Estevan da Gama, son of his younger brother Ayres.

Dom Vasco's personally commanded squadron consisted of ten ships, and he took care that they were well fitted out with "beautiful artillery and plenty of munitions." The crews were "good men-at-arms and gentlemen of birth." The guns were a great advance on the *cameras* used in the first voyage. These *cameras* were tubes or cylinders introduced into the breach of the cannon. They thus were like cartridges or the shell of modern days. The sailors were to be paid three *cruzadoes* a month (say 8s. 3d.) at sea, and one on shore for their maintenance. There was a squadron of five ships, under his uncle Vicente Sodre, intended more particularly for blockading work.

The Admiral made a remarkably quick passage, for from the time he left Cape Verde till he reached Sofala were only ninety-nine days. Père Afonso, who was detached here by Dom Vasco, was very imperative, and terrorized the chief, "a heathen caffre," into signing ■



107



TREASURES OF THE EAST DISPLAYED TO THE KING AND QUEEN. Page 57

## Second Voyage

treaty of submission to the King of Portugal. The value of this may be judged from the chronicle: "The King and his people were much amazed, for they had never seen people write, and they said that the paper spoke by art of the devil."

The ruler of Mozambique had not been over civil to Cabral, but the capture of two Moorish ships off his coast altered his views, and he not only made formal submission, but accepted Gonzalo Baixo as factor, with ten men who were to be both a guard and salesmen of the goods which were landed.

Dom Vasco then sailed on to Kilwa, which had the name of being the most important town on this part of the coast. He found it to be a considerable place built on an island, fortified by walls and towers, but with no territory on the mainland. Here a very peremptory tone was adopted with the Arab ruler. There was a very rich merchant in the town called Mahomed Arcone who was supposed to have ideas of supplanting the "King," and he, for his own ends, advised the Kilwa chief to go and see the Admiral. Dom Vasco told him that if he became a friend of the King of Portugal he would be for ever powerful, which sounded well, but when he went on to say that it would be necessary to pay a certain sum of money every year or a rich jewel, the chief "became very sad" and said that would be tributary subjection and dishonour. The Admiral then said very bluntly that if he did not agree men would be sent on shore to burn the whole place. On board the flagship the Arab, who seems to have had the title of Emir, could hardly do anything but say he would have to go on shore and collect the bracelets and pearls which were to represent the tribute, but he very craftily left Mahomed Arcone as a hostage. When he was safe in

## Vasco da Gama

his Palace again he sent to Dom Vasco, to say the Moorish merchant would pay this tribute, and to the unfortunate Mahomed Arcone to say he must see to it. The Admiral thought this quite convenient, and to save time stripped the merchant and all his companions naked and set them to roast in the sun. The result was the handing over of a jewelled necklace, worth 2,000 *mithkals*, or 10,000 *cruzadoes* (say £1,041). There was no hiding of the fact that it was the merchant and not the Emir who paid the "tribute," but Dom Vasco did not boggle over a trifle like that. He had the assets, and he wanted to get away.

From Mozambique the fleet went on to Malindi and were received in the most friendly way by the chief, who presented a quantity of jewellery for the Queen and particularly an embroidered canopy for a bed, "like none other that had ever been seen." It came from Bengal, "where they make wonderful things with the needle."

No long halt was made at Malindi, and, on the morning after leaving, they fell in with the five ships which had sailed from Lisbon, two months after the main fleet, under the command of Estevan da Gama. On the way across the Persian Gulf they were caught in a violent storm—it was the end of August—and reached land at Dabhol, at that time the second port in the Deccani Kingdom (Bijapur), but now not much more than a paltry village in the Ratnagiri district. The natives were friendly, and brought fowls, figs, and eggs, and after two days the fleet went on down the coast, eager to slaughter Moors. At "a river called Onor," not far from Anjediva, the people were not so lucky. Onor is the present Honawar, and it was the headquarters of Tímoja. It was here that da Gama had



## Second Voyage

believed himself to be threatened by *fustas* on his first voyage. Three of them were seen inshore now, and Estevan da Gama went to reconnoitre. He was fired on from a stockade, landed, and burnt the whole place down. Timoja had used Onor as a starting-point to prey on traders coming down from the Red Sea, and he kept the Rajah of Garsopa, to whom the place belonged, from interfering by paying regular tribute. From this time on Timoja, as an expert in piracy, must have reflected that the Portuguese were better at the game. At any rate, three years later he joined Almeida, the first Viceroy, and afterwards was of very great assistance to Albuquerque in the capture of Goa.

A little south is Baticala, which figured as the great port of "Narsingha." That was the personal name of the Telugu prince who ruled the famous state of Vizayanagara, but the Portuguese, with their disregard for Oriental prejudices, called the state by the name of the ruler. The Baticala people had heard of the doings at Honawar, so they bought safety by handing over 1,500 loads of rice, 500 of which were for the "captains."

As they sailed on down the coast, a squall sprang the main-mast of the *Leitoa Esmeralda*, one of the larger ships, and the fleet put in to the Bay of Marabia to get, or take, a spar from some Arab ships they saw there. This bay was close to Mount D'Ely, and while they were anchored there they saw a large vessel making for the harbour. There is some difference of opinion as to whether it belonged to a Moplah merchant in Calicut or to the Soldan of Egypt, but this was a matter of indifference to the Admiral. The ship was connected with Calicut, and it was full of Mecca pilgrims. It was called the *Meri*, and the caravels intercepted it and brought it in to anchor alongside the flagship. Da

## Vasco da Gama

Gama gave orders that it was to be pillaged and then set on fire. The Moslem captain offered to pay a heavy ransom and actually brought a large sum of gold, but the Admiral sent men to board and to seize it and everything on board. The crew of the *Meri* put up a strong resistance, and after a desperate fight in the "castle," the high poop of the vessel, were overcome and perished, with a great many women pilgrims, some burnt to death, some speared in the water, some pierced by cross-bow shafts.

The chroniclers give gruesome details, which are better omitted. Barros, who no doubt saw official papers at the India House, says the "Captain and Factor" was an Arab named Joam Fiquin, and that the *Meri* was "returning with many honourable Moors and much wealth from the abomination of Mecca." Only twenty children and "a hump-backed Moor, who was the pilot," were picked up. Dom Vasco wrote with bitter malice to the Zamorin that there had been 260 fighting men in the *Meri*, and some fifty women and children, and that none were spared except the hump-backed Moor who delivered the letter.

The news when it got home to Portugal was received with cold-blooded approval. If anything, it was regarded as a proof of the Admiral's zeal for religion. The conclusion was that in exterminating the "foul brood of Mahound" Dom Vasco was acting, in the words of John Brown, the abolition of slavery champion, under "letters of marque from God." The Lisbon people themselves were no less "frightful." In 1506, four years later, 2,000 *Maranos* (forcibly baptized Jews) were massacred for no better reason than that there was plague in the capital.

Dom Vasco at any rate was quite well pleased with

## Second Voyage

himself. He went on to Cannanore, "went to prayers in the church and heard Mass." The Rajah was impressed. He received the Admiral very cordially, and was much pleased with sundry presents given him as from the King of Portugal. He made lavish return, and also said that Calicut was making war on Cochin to put an end to the factory which Cabral had established there. • Da Gama no doubt heard this with grim satisfaction. There could be no opening for a plea of let bygones be bygones, but he had first to settle affairs at Cannanore. After the usual state visit with trumpets and kettledrums he had a formal consultation with the merchants of the town, and as a result a document was drawn up fixing prices and weights, "and for everything ■ settlement was made."

Apparently to prove the value of this agreement, the Admiral detached a squadron under his uncle, Vicente Sodré, to cruise up and down the coast, "making war upon all navigators," except those of Cannanore, Cochin and Coulam (Quilon), in which last state there was a *Nair Rani*—the *Nairs* being polyandrous and matriarchal. Ships from these ports were to have certificates countersigned by the factor in each state.

When he had thus settled trade matters and heard Mass—it would seem that one of the friars had settled in Cannanore, though it is not explicitly mentioned—the Admiral set out for Calicut. The Zamorin had in the meantime heard of da Gama's doings and vapourings and had become thoroughly uneasy. It is said that he sent the Admiral four letters offering a treaty with Portugal and whatever other facilities might seem proper. Dom Vasco treated them all with contempt, sent no written reply, but in forecastle or fish wife fashion said that his master, "the Lord of the Naviga-

## Vasco da Gama

tion, Commerce and Conquest of the East," could fashion as good a king as the Calicut rajah out of a coconut palm. When he did send a letter it was to demand the banishment of "all the Moors." The number was estimated at four thousand, but in real fact, and according to the Roman traveller Varthema, there were at least ten thousand more. It was a Hindu state, of course, but there had been Arabs resident all along the Malabar coast for several centuries.

When the fleet reached Calicut the port was found to be empty, and all the Moslems had fled inland, after hiding their sailing craft in the river and in the backwaters of lagoons which stretched away down to Cochin.

Correa rather unnecessarily says this put Dom Vasco in a passion, and, unfortunately for them, two large dhows and twenty-two *sambuks* came in loaded with rice from the Coromandel coast. The Portuguese caravels, with their superior speed, easily rounded them up and herded them into the fleet's anchorage in front of Calicut. Calicut itself was bombarded, but it is not clear whether these hapless victims were dealt with before or after. The brutal treatment of them was even worse than the slaughter of the *Meri* crew. The hands, ears, and noses of all were slashed off. The mutilated bodies were heaped up in one of the boats. The sails were hoisted and the boat itself set fire to at a time when the rising tide would take it inshore, so that all might see how Dom Vasco avenged the forty-one Portuguese who had been killed in the factory.

The bombardment of Calicut lasted for a whole day and a night. After the bombardment by Cabral the Zamorin had set up a stockade of thick palm trunks in front of the city. This served as a screen to the Portuguese smaller vessels, which drew close inshore



## Second Voyage

and probably did more damage than the big ships outside. A great part of the city was destroyed and very many of the inhabitants were killed. Bishop Osorio specially mentions that the Zamorin's town palace, close to the sea-front, was burnt with the rest.

After these vindictive doings Dom Vasco sailed for Cochin, leaving his uncle, Vicente Sodré, with Bras Sodré, another brother of his mother, to "infest the coast," ■ Osorio puts it in episcopal language, and on his way south he did "as much harm as he could" to all the vessels he met along the coast on the fifty miles to Cochin. There interviews and compliments were exchanged, as well as presents, which on the Portuguese side were much more valuable than on the first voyage.

The factor had warned the Admiral that Trimumpara, as they called the Rajah, was doubtful in his fidelity; but when the chief came on board the flagship, not in state, but with only a half-dozen dependants, he was reassured, and the more so when Cochin warned him to load up quickly because the Zamorin was preparing a great fleet to come and attack him.

After the same haggling as there had been at Cannanore an agreement was arrived at.

While the loading of the ships was going on, the Queen of Coulam (Quilon) wrote asking for the same advantages as Cochin had got. The *Rani* was a *Nair*, and, according to the custom of polyandry amongst *Nairs*, "she was a Queen though her husband was not"—possibly Correa hesitated at writing husbands. A treaty with Quilon was therefore signed, and the merchants of the small state—it extended round Cape Comorin—were promised safe conducts on the same terms as those of Cochin and Cannanore.

In anticipation of his coming, the Cochin merchants

## Vasco da Gama

had brought all manner of drugs from Ceylon, Malacca and Banda, so that full loads were very soon <sup>ready</sup> ~~gotten~~, and Dom Vasco set about building a large ~~shed~~ <sup>store</sup> to store cargo and refit ships when necessary, ~~and~~ to build new ones. Therefore he left carpenters, caulkers, blacksmiths, turners, and cordage makers, and also detailed thirty men-at-arms ■ a guard.

When he had bid farewell to Trimumpara he set sail with either ten or thirteen fully laden ships—the chroniclers, ■ usual, do not agree—while Vicente Sodré with five caravels kept close inshore. They came upon the Calicut fleet, “all, in a line, one after the other,” and Sodré made straight for the flagship. Each of the caravels had four heavy guns below and above, six falconets and two swivel guns on the quarter-deck and in the bows, and, we are told, the ships of burden were much more heavily equipped with artillery. The Calicut men fought pluckily enough, but their guns were much inferior, and the end soon came. The Portuguese got orders to board the ships and plunder them, but there was no plunder, for the Arabs had come to fight. So the ships were set on fire.

Dom Vasco then sailed on to Cannanore, while Vicente Sodré, with some of the captured *sambuks* and other craft in tow, went as far as Calicut, where he lashed them together in one batch, and set fire to them so that they would float inshore with the tide. Then he joined the Admiral at Cannanore and got final instructions to block the straits of Bab-el-mandeb, if the Malabar coast remained quiet.

Dom Vasco himself sailed for home on December 28, 1502. He had favourable weather throughout and arrived at Malindi “in few days.” The chief received him cordially ■ usual, and after taking in ■ supply



THE BOMBARDMENT OF CAICUI. *Pages 68-69*

## Second Voyage

of sheep, fresh vegetables and water, he sailed again after only a single day's halt. The fleet hugged the shore and might have visited Mozambique, "but did not choose to do so," and went on to Terceira, but did not halt there either, for he had a very fair wind. The bar at Lisbon was reached on September 1, 1503, and there were twelve laden ships in the fleet.

Six days later Estevan da Gama arrived with six. The venture had been most prosperous, and there was special exultation because the main fleet had weighed anchor at Malindi and kept it catted all the way to Lisbon.

## CHAPTER VII

### DOM VASCO IN RETIREMENT: AFFAIRS IN INDIA

Dom Vasco was received with great enthusiasm both by the King and the people of Lisbon. Manoel went to a formal thanksgiving service at the Cathedral of St. Vincent and ordered the whole ships' crews and staff to attend and "give praise to the Lord, accompanied by the Bishop of Guarda and the Count of Penela." Da Gama was created "Admiral of the Seas of India for ever," and the anchorage dues were assigned to him and his heirs. Great favours also were bestowed on the captains, and "immediate payment was made to the crews of all that was owing to them" and "an easy despatch of their chests and things in the Customs House."

From 1503 on for twenty-one years da Gama gave up voyaging and acted merely as the authority on all Indian affairs. It is recorded that he was chief adviser to Tristan da Cunha in his expedition of 1505, and when da Cunha became temporarily blind, "directed and



## Vasco da Gama

ordained " everything for Almeida, and especially gave him very full minutes, suggesting what he ought to do as first Viceroy of India.

There has been a suggestion that his retirement was due to the jealousy of the Kings and Camoens, and others have accused Manoel of niggardliness. In Portuguese history King Manoel is labelled "the fortunate." He certainly raised Portugal to a position among the countries of Europe which would have been considered incredible fifty years before. In that assuredly he was fortunate, mainly owing to the energy and tenacity of Vasco da Gama. Possibly he thought himself unlucky, for a great part of his reign and both his marriages were directed to uniting the kingdoms of Portugal and Spain under his crown, and in this he failed.

The description of him is not attractive: "An unscrutable, almost sullen face; little greenish eyes; dark brown hair; tall meagre frame, with every sinew toughened by exercise; ape-like arms, so long that, when he stood upright and let them hang, his fingers extended below his knees"—like those of Rob Roy. He tried to conciliate the Holy See by sending envoys to Leo X. to checkmate the Venetian diplomats, who did their best to egg on the rising Ottoman power to vengeance for the eclipse which Portuguese doings in the East had brought on the old Eastern caravan trade. He founded twenty-six monasteries and two cathedrals, and he was so great a patron of the arts that the Manoelesque style of architecture is a permanent memorial. He was in fact a notable example of strength of mind and body and ambitions. Most of his enterprises were no doubt investments, but they do not suggest parsimony.

As far as Vasco da Gama is concerned, the accusation

## Dom Vasco in Retirement

is not borne out by the records. On the contrary, the navigator was treated with distinct liberality, and his numberless petitions and importunings must have made him seem little better than a nuisance. He had married a lady of rank, Dona Catharina da Athayde, and was set on establishing a family in the ranks of the nobility. There is nothing to show that he had any serious illness on either of his voyages, but his privations probably affected his health, and no doubt he remembered the traditional sailor's groan in bad weather: "Sell a farm and go to sea."

King Manoel may not have rewarded Pacheco, the heroic defender of Cochin, according to his merits. His neglect may have driven Magelhães to enter the service of Spain and to discover the Straits of Magellan for that country, but da Gama certainly could not claim that the grants to him were not generous. Within six months of his return from the first voyage a pension of 300,000 *reis* (£362) was assigned to him and his heirs, and this was followed in the next year, the eve of his second voyage, by another pension of 1,000 *cruzadoes* (£485), together with the title of Admiral of India. These revenues were secured by charges on the excise and fisheries of Sines, the gold from St. George of the Mine on the Guinea Coast, and the Lisbon salt and timber octroi. He also was allowed the valuable privilege of sending annually to India 200 *cruzadoes* to be laid out in merchandise, upon which no import duties were to be charged. A few months after his return from the second voyage the King bestowed a further hereditary pension of 400,000 *reis*, 1,000 *cruzadoes* or £485.

Still Dom Vasco was not satisfied, though in 1507 Leonardo Messer, the Venetian ambassador in Lisbon,

## Vasco da Gama

estimated the Admiral's income at 4,000 ducats (£1,930). For those days this was a princely sum. There were only six noblemen, two archbishops, and seven bishops in all Portugal who had a larger income.

What the Admiral of India wanted was a manor and a position among the feudal nobility. We have seen that on his return from the first voyage he had claimed the seigniorship of Sines, his birthplace, and the King and the Pope were quite willing that he should have it, but the Order of Santiago would not give it up or exchange it. Dom Vasco, with memories of what audacity had done for him in the East and with an overweening conviction of the service he had rendered his country, thought he would take the settlement into his own hands. He went to Sines and began to build himself a manor house and generally carried on as if Sines were his own property. He built a church which still stands over the village, weather-beaten by Atlantic gales. This apparent piety did not soften the Grand Master of Santiago. He was as stubborn as the sea-dog, and though King Manoel cannot be looked on as a pious son of the Church, he was not prepared to quarrel with Holy Orders, so he ordered Dom Vasco to leave within the month and not to return without the permission of the Grand Master. These commands were conveyed to him by his own uncle, John da Gama, who was Bursar of the Order, and the Admiral could not do anything else but obey.

He went off to establish himself at Evora, and evidently went on with his pestering claims. The Venetian ambassador, an impartial witness, says that the navigator was very ill-tempered and unreasonable. This was in 1507, and the following year the King suggested that he should take the *Alcalde-Môr*-ship of Villafranca de

## Dom Vasco in Retirement

Xira in the Tagus Valley; but the negotiations fell through, whether the incumbent did not care for the Admiral's offer, or because the Admiral thought the post not good enough for his dignity.

Evora, where he went to live, was a cathedral town in the heart of Alemtejo, and there he built himself a house and had the walls painted with Indian beasts and flowers, and the presentment of the inhabitants of the country, Moslems or otherwise. The street where he lived is still called the Rue das Casas Pintadas, but the house has been "restored," and of course the frescoes have long since vanished. Probably this kept him occupied for a time, but the grousing evidently went on periodically, for, at the end of ten years, when da Gama still had no manor and no title, he announced that he was going to leave the country. This was in August, 1518, and it is significant that the year before Magellan had left Portugal and taken service with Charles V., the great rival of Francis I., who remained "Protestant abroad," though he was "Catholic at home."

Dom Vasco's letter was a sort of final reminder, a summary of previous complaints that the countship promised him was never coming. Manoel, with remarkable long-suffering, asked him to wait till the end of the year, and may have prompted the result. At any rate, Dom Jaime, Duke of Braganza and nephew to the King, intervened. He was a great admirer of the Admiral, and offered to put the towns of Vidigueira and Villa de Frades at his disposal. It was not to be done for nothing. Dom Vasco ceded to the Duke the hereditary royal pension of 400,000 *reis* and a sum of 1,000 *cruzadoes* in gold. The manorial rights were transferred, and the King conferred the long coveted title of Conde.



## Vasco da Gama

For the next eleven years there is no mention of what the Count did. Apparently he stayed on in Évora and never went to live at Vidigueira. That and Grades are mere villages in the foothills of the Serra Mendro, and have a fine outlook over the undulating country of Southern Alentejo. During the twenty-one years of his retirement, except for his clamourings to be made a count, there is nothing to show what Vasco da Gama did, but his wife bore him six sons. The eldest, Francisco, succeeded to the title; Estevan, the second, became Governor of India in 1540; Paulo, the third, was killed in action in Malacca; Christovam in Abyssinia; and the fifth and sixth, Pedro and Alvaro, were successively Captains of Malacca.

During this time there had been great changes in the East, and it was a very different India that he went back to when John III. became King and sent him out to be Viceroy. The profits from India were enormous, and it was clear that if the sea-route were firmly held, a Portuguese monopoly would be established and more and more wealth would pour in. Therefore fleets went out every year, and it was evident that the factories for storing cargoes would have to be armed and made capable of defence.

In 1503 a fleet went out in two sections, one under Afonso Albuquerque, his first visit to India, and the other under his cousin Francisco. The cousins were not at all on good terms. They quarrelled about the loading of spices and sailed for home independently. Francisco went with three ships. They were lost at sea, but where and how was never learnt.

Cochin had been attacked from Calicut, and the Portuguese soon drove the *Nairs* off, but they insisted upon the setting up of "a fortress made of palisades

## Dom Vasco in Retirement

filled in with earth." It was the first built on Indian soil, and it was soon proved to be valuable and necessary, for the fort was attacked by a large force of the Zamorin's, and was only saved by the bravery of Duarte Pacheco, the "Portuguese Achilles." Camoens celebrates his prowess and denounces Manoel's stinginess, and he certainly seems to have been somewhat scurvily treated, though he ended as Governor of St. George of the Mine. If sheer pluck deserved reward there was nothing that he should not have got, though the memory of 'da Gama's mercilessness must have convinced the whole garrison that it was a case of fighting for their lives.

Only a month later than the Albuquerque's expedition another batch of three ships sailed from Lisbon, under the command of Antonio da Saldanha. He sailed north to Cape Gardafui and discovered Socotra. His object had been to lie in wait for Egyptian and Turkish ships coming down the Red Sea, and this island was clearly an admirable place to lie to at. Saldanha also discovered that fresh water was to be got in the bay which was named after him, and seems to have been regularly used from this time on when water was wanted or when bad weather made it impossible to round the Cape.

Saldanha went home with full cargoes of spices, and left a ship under Diego Pereira to keep guard at Socotra and put an end to the Egyptian trade which had been carried on for so long.

King Manoel may not have been altogether pleasant to look at, or estimable in character, but he was very clear-sighted and capable. He was very quick to realize, after the siege of Cochin and the establishment of a guardship at Socotra, that it was not only necessary to have a permanent squadron in the Indian seas, but

## Vasco da Gama

that he must have someone in authority to superintend and direct the movements of the ships. Therefore in 1505 he created the new office of Viceroy of India, and the first Viceroy was Dom Francisco da Almeida. The post was to be a three-year appointment, and Almeida was not long in formulating a definite policy that ought to be followed if the Portuguese monopoly was to be established and maintained. He was the earliest advocate of sea-power. "Avoid the annexation of territory," he wrote, "build no fortresses that are not necessary to protect your factories from a sudden attack. Portugal wants all its men for the navy and can spare none for garrisons."

Almeida went out with a fleet of twenty vessels, six of which were caravels. With the object of providing ports for repair and revictualling he built "fortresses" at Kilwa, called Samtiago, and at Anjediva, called Santa Christinha. These were presumably blockhouses to begin with, for it is specially recorded that the fortress set up at Cannanore was of "stone and mortar." This was in 1506, and three years later a similar fortress was built in Mozambique. He also felt his way to the informal alliance with the great Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar, the inveterate enemy of the Moslem states to the north. This was on the suggestion of Timoja, the pirate of whom Vasco da Gama heard on his second voyage. Timoja had been for years occupied in snapping up stray Egyptian and Turkish vessels as an admitted buccaneer, and when he found that this was also the Portuguese practice, he gave up being an independent sea-robber and became an ally. His local knowledge was most useful.

The Portuguese had heard of the magnificence and power of Vijayanagar, but it would not have occurred

## Dom Vasco in Retirement

to them so early that Vijayanagar could be most useful in combating the Dekkani kingdoms. The Portuguese were to harry the Red Sea and Persian Gulf traders and take Moslem produce. And Vijayanagar was to see that the fortified posts for the Portuguese fleets and factories were not overwhelmed from the land. Otherwise things went on as before. The Portuguese broke up the "Moorish" coveys, and Timoja picked off the stray birds.

The scheme worked so well that it led to the sending out of a great fleet by the "Grand Soldan of Egypt and Babylonia." This was commanded by Mir Hussein, and was intended to put an end to Portuguese interference with the age-old trade to the Mediterranean.

After an early clash in which Almeida's only son was killed, the two fleets met, and in a desperate fight off Diu, an island seaport south of the Katiawar Peninsula, Mir Hussein was signally defeated. This was in 1509, and not only the Egyptian fleet but seven hundred foists sent by the Zamorin were shattered in the engagement.

This was practically the end of Almeida's three-year term. He had confined himself to securing the command of the sea, and had not been tempted to make annexations or to carry on mission work in the way of exterminating all Mahommedans. He was now to be succeeded by Albuquerque, whose policy was very different.

Three years before this Diu sea-fight Tristan da Cunha (our spelling of the island which he discovered is not the way of writing his name) and Albuquerque had sailed from Lisbon with fourteen ships. Tristan da Cunha was unfortunate in several ways. He should have gone out in command of the ships which made up Almeida's fleet in 1505, but a sudden attack of blindness



## Vasco da Gama

prevented it, and when he did sail with another squadron a year after, he and Albuquerque did not get on at all well together. In the first place, da Cunha's ship was very slow and delayed the whole fleet, and later he took ■ great deal more interest in the newly discovered island of Madagascar than his colleague, the eager Dom Afonso, thought justified.

They did, however, sail to Socotra together, and had some stiff fighting at Soko before they took the fort built by the Fartaquins (men from Arabia) to control the very ambiguous Nestorian Christians who held the island. In the storming of this fort Albuquerque was felled by a "corner stone" flung from the keep, but only temporarily lost consciousness. Then the two separated.

Da Cunha went on to the Malabar coast, and Albuquerque went round the Gulf coast, burning Muscat and other places there. He found this so easy that he determined to capture Ormuz, the famous port that commanded the Arabian Sea. He had practically taken it and was proceeding with new fortifications, when he was left nearly helpless by rebellious captains, chief among whom was da Nova, who had led an expedition to India some years before. He had to retire to Socotra and then went on to Cochin, where he proposed to act on King Manoel's secret instructions to take over the Viceroyalty when Almeida's term was ended.

The insubordinate captains had so far influenced Almeida that he decided not to resign, and took the extreme measure of arresting Albuquerque and imprisoned him in Cannanore, where he remained for three months. Then, however, the Marshal of Portugal, D. Fernando da Coutinho, arrived with sixteen ships and three thousand men. The Marshal was a kinsman of

## Dom Vasco in Retirement

King Manoel and so also of Albuquerque, who was related to the royal family, and he brought direct orders to Almeida that he was to hand over to Albuquerque.

There was no disputing this, so Almeida sailed for Portugal, only to be murdered by Hottentots in an inglorious affray in Table Bay. Albuquerque was Governor, but the Marshal of Portugal ranked above him and had direct instructions from the King, no doubt prompted by the rancorous Vasco da Gama, to punish Calicut. The Zamorin was known to have a large army available, and Albuquerque advised against an attack, but he was overridden. The Portuguese drove in as far as the Palace, and then were surrounded by *Nair* warriors. It was only Albuquerque's foresight in leaving a strong rearguard, which saved the whole force from being annihilated. The Marshal da Coutinho was killed and Albuquerque himself was badly wounded by a spear thrust.

The death of the Marshal and the return to Portugal of two co-equal admirals left Albuquerque free to carry out his ambitious schemes. These were: the capture of Goa to be a naval base and colony; of Malacca, because it controlled the spice islands and linked India with the Far East; of Ormuz and Aden, because they commanded the Persian Gulf and the entrance to the Red Sea.

He took Goa at the second attempt, and made all sure by three days' massacre of the Moslem inhabitants, and he appointed the retired pirate Timoja to be *Alguazil*. Then he sailed for Malacca, and after a stubborn fight for a bridge in the centre of the town, captured it, expelled all the Malays and built a fort and factory.

Then he returned to Goa and finally established himself there after beating off an invading army from the

## Vasco da Gama

Dekkan. From Goa as a firm base he went on to attack Aden, but there he failed, after a desperate attempt to carry it by assault, in which Noronha, his nephew, was killed.

Aden was valuable for guarding the exit from the Red Sea, but Ormuz was famous for its wealth all over the East. A futile expedition up the Red Sea, when great numbers perished from the heat, delayed his attack, and during 1513 and 1514 he settled the administration of Goa and built a number of forts and factories along the Malabar coast, notably one at the stubborn Calicut.

In March, 1515, he made his attack on Ormuz. The city was torn by intestine dissensions. There were "fifteen blind kings," princes of the blood, whose eyes had been scorched out by passing across them a white-hot bronze bowl, but there was only one man to be feared, Rais Amman, nephew of the aged King. Albuquerque invited this "tall, black-bearded Persian," to a conference, at which he was murdered. Correa, the historian, was present, and apparently was one of the assassins. At any rate, he got a gold-embroidered scarf, which he sold for 20 *xerafins* (£6 19s. 2d.).

Albuquerque immediately set about building a fort, but there were many deaths from the terrific heat, and the Viceroy himself had an attack of dysentery. He sailed for Goa and died while the ship was coming to anchor, after having heard on the voyage that he was to be superseded as Viceroy.

He was as fiery and hot-headed as Vasco da Gama, or any curry-eating nabob. Where Mahomedans were concerned he was equally bloodthirsty and merciless. Though he was related to the royal house of Portugal, he was homely in his ways, ate his food with the soldiers, kept the door of his viceregal palace always open, and

## Dom Vasco in Retirement

did not live to heap up riches like most of his successors. He could see humour in everything, which da Gama never did. When the sailors were in a panic over a tornado he could say: "They were for ever with the pumps in their hands and the Virgin Mary in their mouths." He liked to lead his men; Vasco da Gama always drove them.

King Manoel was crazed about founding an Eastern Empire, and he infected Albuquerque. The two of them would have done well to follow Almeida's advice. He recognized that Portugal had not enough men to hold and control all he seized, and that was why he hit on the wild expedient of encouraging his men to marry Indian women. The manners of the time encouraged it, but the Inquisition insisted that the women should be baptized first, and they were herded in like sheep for the purpose. He has been praised for forbidding suttee, the burning of widows, but this may have been because (after baptism) he thought they might be put to better uses, and quite possibly the Inquisition thought it a heathen plagiarism of the *auto-da-fé*.

He died in 1515, and for the next nine years he was succeeded by Viceroys or Governors—the titles seem to have been interchangeable—some of whom were colourless and some distinctly bad. Vasco da Gama was the obvious man, but his pertinacity when he was simple Dom may have led King Manoel to shrink at the thought of what the Count of Vidigueira might urge after return from a new voyage.



# Vasco da Gama

## CHAPTER VIII

### VASCO DA GAMA'S THIRD VOYAGE AND VICEROYALTY

VASCO DA GAMA was in his sixty-fifth year when he left on his third voyage to India. According to our ideas he was too old. It is also not easy to see why he had not been sent before. The chroniclers give us no explanation. It has been suggested that King Manoel found him too masterful and too dogmatic. At any rate, Manoel had been three years dead before his successor, John III., selected Vidigueira as a man "of experience and authority."

The actual Governor—he is not given the title of Viceroy—was D. Duarte da Meneses, and he had been in charge since 1522. We have to remember that the censor summarily cut down the chroniclers, and we are only darkly told by them that he had been "guilty of evil deeds," and so had Francisco Pereira, the captain of the fortress.

The Chamber of Goa had written a long letter to the King, John III., discreetly hinting that both D. Duarte and a good many more fell short of perfection. Therefore the Count of Vidigueira was authorized to call upon D. Duarte to send in his accounts and sail for Lisbon. The "chamber" consisted of "eighteen householders, chief men of Goa," who drew up the petition and wanted the Bishop, Dom Martinho, to endorse it. But "the Bishop was virtuous," said he was ill, and "turned aside from the whole matter." One of the eighteen "turned Judas" and told Pereira, who "played the devil with some he laid hands on." This appears to show why John III. chose da Gama. He was certainly a man of experience, and he feared neither man nor devil.

## Third Voyage and Viceroyalty

Consequently on April 9, 1524, with a fleet of fourteen ships, the Count sailed from Lisbon, accompanied by his two sons, Estevan and Paulo. The flagship, was the *S. Catherine of Mount Sinai*, which must have been considerably larger than the *S. Raphael*, but her tonnage is not recorded. Barros says the fleet carried 3,000 men.

"He brought with him great state," says Correa. "He was served by men bearing silver maces, by a major-domo and two pages with gold neck-chains, many equerries and body servants, very well clothed and cared for; he also brought rich vessels of silver, and rich tapestry of Flanders, and for the table at which he sate, brocade cloths. They brought to him at table, large dishes as if to the King, with his napkin bearer bringing him the ewer and all the forms of precedence of a King. The ornaments of his wardrobe, bed and chapel were very complete, with much show and arrangement. He had a guard of two hundred men, with gilt pikes, clothed with his livery. He kept a splendid table; all the gentlemen and honourable persons ate with him. He brought with him complete power of justice and revenue, like the King's self, over all persons who might be found beyond the Cape of Good Hope. He was a very disdainful man, and ready to anger, very rash, much feared and respected, very knowing and experienced in all matters. He brought with him very brilliant soldiers, and as captains men of high family, the greater part of whom had been brought up in the labours of Indian affairs."

Three of his captains, in fact, in the years that were to come, became Governors of India.

The passage out was quite uneventful, and Mozambique was reached on August 14. Before he sailed the

## Vasco da Gama

Admiral had posted ■ notice on the main-mast that any women concealing themselves on board would be publicly flogged. At Mozambique three of them were detected and denounced. The flogging was inflicted, but apparently not before the fleet reached Goa. Possibly there was a feeling that European women should not be shamed before Orientals—and by this time there was a large population besides Easterns at Goa. As it was, there was a great outcry against the sentence. The Bishop, the Brothers of Mercy, many *fidalgos*, and even the Franciscan Friars, interceded, but in vain. The women were flogged in Goa streets, but when da Gama died, five months later, he bequeathed a considerable dowry to each of them.

By September 8 the fleet had reached Dabhol, and in a dead calm they had an unpleasant experience. The sea boiled, the vessels pitched, and when the lead was heaved they found no bottom. It was an earthquake, and the crews were panic-stricken, but Vidigueira calmed them by saying that the sea trembled at seeing such an armament.

The "Chamber of Commerce" of Goa wrote a memorial to King John III., giving an account of the Admiral's arrival. What struck them most of all was his flat refusal to accept any gift from Christian or Moor. That was very far from the habit of his predecessor Dom Duarte da Meneses, or indeed of the mass of the officials. Instead, the new ruler set about reforming the service and the courts of justice. Those applying for an appointment had to go through some sort of examination. A candidate for a clerkship, for example, had to submit a specimen of his handwriting. It is not certain whether Correa, who had been clerk to Albuquerque, was still in Goa, or whether he had gone to



## Third Voyage and Viceroyalty

settle in Malacca, but his comment on this measure was that the staff came to consist of "very official men." The Admiral was very bitter against those who came out to India only to make money for themselves. He wanted to "make the King's fortune"—and of course he had done very well for himself.

He overwhelmed Goa with reforms. Albuquerque, with the idea of filling the ranks which disease and fighting thinned, had ruled that men who married were to get free rations as well as their pay. Da Gama stopped that, but his regulations went much farther. He had it proclaimed "that no seafaring man should wear a cloak except on a Sunday or Saint's day on going to church, and if they did that it should be taken away by the constables, and they should be put at the pump-break for a day in disgrace; and that every man who drew pay as a matchlock man should have his match fastened to his arm." He forbade "pages dressed up like dolls"; anyone who had got any "of the King's artillery" was to deliver it up on pain of death and confiscation. He was especially hard on the "gentlemen who were dissolute and evil-doers," and there seem to have been a great many of them. The allusion to the King's artillery seems to hint at footpads as well as the dakoits endemic in India.

Accordingly when he went south to Cochin the Moslems in a body fled into the interior, and even many of the Portuguese migrated to the Coromandel coast.

There is some confusion as to the exact date when the Count became titular Viceroy. After the earthquake the fleet had sailed to Chaul, twenty-three miles north of Goa, possibly in the belief that da Meneses was there, but Dom Duarte was not at Chaul, and had in fact gone off to Ormuz. From Chaul, therefore, the fleet



## Vasco da Gama

went to Golden Goa, and da Gama proceeded to act as if he were really Viceroy, all the more readily because it was clear that da Meneses was deliberately keeping out of the way. He had no doubt heard that the Count's health was anything but good, and hoped that he might die soon, in which case the government would not pass. Technically, da Gama did not become Viceroy till Dom Duarte formally announced that he resigned, which was in a document dated December 4, 1524, three weeks before da Gama's death. During Vidigueira's voyage south he called in at various ports and rivers and left guards to check the piracy which kept up the old reputation of the "Pirate Coast." The native craft were much too fast sailing or rowing for the heavy Portuguese ships, and flitted round them "as a light horseman hovers round a man-at-arms." Four new *catur*s had been built to pursue and catch these pests. These *catur*s were of "sharp build and rowed well." Da Gama looked at them and in his lordly way had them burnt. He summoned a certain Master Vyne, a Genoese, whom he had brought out to build galleys, and ordered him to build something really fast. Master Vyne was a confident person, for he undertook to build brigantines "which would catch a mosquito." They were "brigantines of the levantine fashion," and he launched two in twenty days. Da Gama gave extra pay and rations to all those who would volunteer for them, and they were to have everything in the shape of deck freight that might be in their captures. Every man had under his thwart a steel helmet and breastplate, a lance and two powder pots; so, as Correa puts it, "nothing escaped them either with oars or sails, or fighting." These brigantines proved as effective in harrying the native craft as Vyne and the Viceroy hoped,

## Third Voyage and Viceroyalty

and the *justas*, whether of buccaneers or patriots were severely chastened.

At the same time da Gama was scaring the officials with temporary honesty. "Officials of justice or revenue" if found guilty of malpractices were to find "civil penalties changed into criminal chastisements."

Dom Duarte da Meneses arrived in Cochin late in November, having dawdled all the way and put in as much time as possible at Muscat, Chaul and Goa. The exact date of his arrival is said to be "scratched out of the MSS."

The Count ordered him not to disembark, but to consider himself under arrest, and to return to Lisbon in the *Castello*, a ship which was then lading. It was notorious that Vidigueira was in failing health, so D. Duarte, instead of going to the *Castello*, remained on board his own ship, the *San Jorge*, which showed that he cannot have known da Gama. Well or ill, he was not a man to be trifled with, and he did not hesitate now. He sent off the Auditor-General and the Chief Constable—a suggestive association—in two warships, which were to anchor, one on each side of the *San Jorge*, and if D. Duarte did not move to the *Castello*, to sink the ship and waste no time over it.

Very shortly after da Meneses sailed Count Vidigueira fell very seriously ill. He suffered from abscesses on the nape of the neck, which "got awry," so that he was not able to turn his neck in any direction. They may have been carbuncles, or the Eastern ailment called Scinde boils, or in Cochin China *plaies annamites*. He died on Christmas Eve, 1524, after ruling over India for what is usually estimated to be three months, and he retained consciousness to the last, even to the extent of drawing up minutes for the guidance of his successor and



## Vasco da Gama

appointing Lopo Vaz da Sampayo and Afonso Mexia to carry on the affairs of State.

He was buried in the principal chapel of the monastery of St. Anthony in Cochin, "dressed in silk clothes and over them a mantle of the Order of Christ, with a sword and gilded belt, and gilt spurs fixed upon dark buskins, and on his head a dark round barvet-cap."

His sons, Estevan and Paulo, went home in the ship of a merchant and were received with great honour by the King. The cathedral in which he was buried no longer exists. It was blown up by the East India Company "to prevent Charles James Fox from restoring Cochin and other Dutch colonies to Holland." Cochin saw the only port on that coast south of Bombay where large ships could be built.

The remains of Dom Vasco were removed to Portugal in 1538 and buried in his vault in the town of Vidigueira.

It is unpleasantly clear that there was more relief than sorrow at his death. Correa says: "It pleased the Lord to give this man so strong a spirit that, without any human fear, he passed through so many perils of death during the discovery of India, as is related in his history; all for the love of the Lord, for the great increase of his Catholic faith, and for the great honour and glory and ennobling of Portugal, which God increased by his holy mercy to the state in which it now is."

